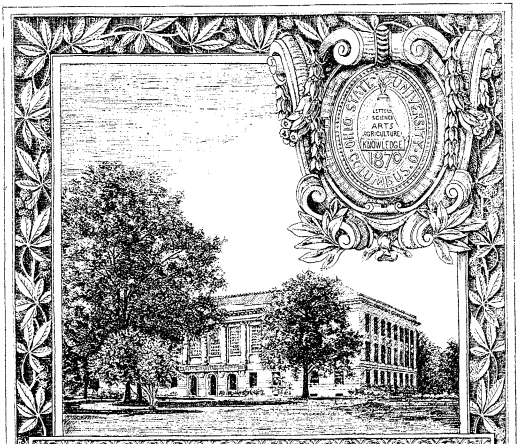

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IVAN TURGENEV

I. RUDIN.
II. A HOUSE OF GENTLEFOLK.
III. ON THE EVE.
IV. FATHERS AND CHILDREN.
V. SMOKE.
VI. & VII. VIRGIN SOIL. 2 vols.
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NEW YORK: THE MACMILLAN COMPANY
LONDON: WILLIAM HEINEMANN

THE NOVELS OF IVAN TURGENEV

VIRGIN SOIL

TRANSLATED FROM THE RUSSIAN

By

CONSTANCE GARNETT

VOLUME II

NEW YORK: THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

LONDON: WILLIAM HEINEMANN

MCMXX

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XXI

THE sky was overcast with low clouds, and although it was not perfectly dark, and in front the cart-ruts could be distinguished standing out on the road, to right and left everything was in shadow, and the outlines of separate objects fell together into big confused patches of darkness. It was a dim, treacherous night; the wind blew in gusty, damp squalls, bringing with it the scent of rain and of broad fields of corn. When they had passed the oak bush which served as a landmark, and had to turn off into the by-road, driving was still more difficult; the narrow track was quite lost at times. . . . The coachman drove more slowly.

'I hope we're not going to lose our way,' observed Nezhdanov, who had been silent till then.

'No; we shan't lose our way!' answered Markelov. 'Two misfortunes don't come in one day.'

'Why, what was the first misfortune?'

'What? why, we've wasted our day for nothing—don't you reckon that as anything?'

'Yes . . . of course. . . . That awful Golushkin! We oughtn't to have drunk so much wine. My head aches now . . . fearfully.'

'I wasn't speaking of Golushkin; he at any rate gave us some money, so that was at least something gained by our visit!'

'Surely you don't regret Paklin's having taken us to his . . . what was it he called them—poll-parrots?'

'There's nothing to regret in it . . . and there's nothing to rejoice at either. I'm not one of those who take interest in such trifles. . . . I was not referring to that misfortune.'

'What, then?'

Markelov make no reply, he simply turned a little in his corner, as though he were wrapping himself up. Nezhdanov could not quite make out his face; only his moustaches stood out in a black transverse line; but ever since the morning he had been conscious of something in Markelov it was better not to touch upon—some obscure, secret irritation.

'Tell me, Sergei Mihalovitch,' he began after a long pause, 'are you in earnest in admiring Mr. Kislyakov's letters, that you gave me to read this morning? You know—

excuse the crudity of the expression—it's all perfect rubbish!'

Markelov drew himself up.

'In the first place,' he began in a wrathful voice, 'I don't at all share your opinion about those letters. I think them very remarkable . . . and conscientious! And secondly, Kislyakov toils and slaves, and, what's more, he *believes*; he believes in our cause, he believes in revolution! I must tell you one thing, Alexey Dmitrievitch, I notice that *you*—you are very lukewarm in our cause; you don't believe in it!'

'What makes you think that?' Nezhdanov articulated slowly.

'What? Why, every word you say, your whole behaviour! To-day at Golushkin's, who was it said he didn't see what elements we could depend on? You! Who asked us to point to any? You! And when that friend of yours, that grinning ape and buffoon, Mr. Paklin, began declaring, with eyes upturned to heaven, that not one of us was capable of sacrifice, who was it backed him up, who was it nodded his head in approval? Wasn't that you? Say what you please of yourself, and think of yourself what you know . . . that's your affair . . . but I know of people who are capable of renouncing everything that makes life sweet, even the bliss of love, to be true to their convictions, not to betray

them! Oh, to-day, *you* are not capable of that, of course!'

'To-day? And why to-day?'

'Come, no humbug, for God's sake, you happy Don Juan, you myrtle-crowned lover!' shouted Markelov, totally oblivious of the coachman, who, though he did not turn round on the box, could hear everything perfectly distinctly. It is true the coachman was at that instant far more interested in the road than in any wrangling on the part of the gentlemen sitting behind him, and he cautiously and rather timorously urged on the centre horse, who shook his head and backed, letting the coach slide down a sort of rocky prominence, which certainly ought not to have been there at all.

'Excuse me, I don't quite understand you,' said Nezhdanov.

Markelov gave a forced, vindictive chuckle.

'You don't understand me! Ha! ha! ha! I know all about it, my fine gentleman! I know whom you had a love-scene with yesterday; I know who it is you've fascinated with your good looks and your fine talk; I know who lets you into her room . . . after ten o'clock at night!'

'Master!' the coachman suddenly addressed Markelov, 'take the reins . . . I'll get down and have a look. . . . I think we've got off the

road. . . . There seems a sort of ravine here, or something. . . .'

The coach was, in fact, all on one side. Markelov clutched the reins handed him by the coachman, and went on as loudly as ever: 'I don't blame you, Alexey Dmitritch! You profited . . . of course. You were right. I only say that I don't wonder at your lukewarmness over our cause; you'd something else, I say again, in your heart. And I say, too, for my own part, what man can guess beforehand what will take girls' hearts, or understand what it is they want! . . .'

'I understand you now,' Nezhdanov began, 'I understand your mortification, guess who has spied on us and lost no time in telling you. . . .'

'It's not merit in this case,' Markelov went on, affecting not to hear Nezhdanov, and intentionally dwelling on and prolonging each word, 'not any extraordinary qualities of mind or body. . . . No! It's simply . . . the cursed luck of all illegitimate children, . . of all . . . bastards!'

The last phrase Markelov uttered abruptly and rapidly, and at once was still as death.

Nezhdanov felt himself grow pale all over in the darkness, and spasms passed over his face. He could scarcely restrain himself from flying at Markelov, seizing him by the throat . .

'This insult must be washed out in blood, in blood. . . .'

'I've found the road!' cried the coachman, making his appearance at the right front wheel. 'I made a little mistake, kept too much to the left . . . it's no matter now! We'll be there in no time; there's not a mile before us. Be pleased to sit still!'

He clambered on to the box, took the reins from Markelov, turned the shaft horse's head. . . The coach, after two violent jolts, rolled along more easily and evenly, the darkness seemed to part and to lift, there was a smell of smoke, in front rose a sort of hillock. Then a light twinkled . . . and vanished. . . . Another glimmered. . . . A dog barked. . . .

'Our huts,' said the coachman; 'ah, get along, my pretty pussies!'

The lights came more and more often to meet them.

'After that insult,' Nezhdanov began at last, 'you will readily understand, Sergei Mihalovitch, that I cannot spend a night under your roof; I am therefore, unpleasant as it is to me, forced to ask you to lend me your coach, when you reach home, so that I may return to the town; to-morrow I will find means of getting home; and then you shall receive from me the communication you doubtless expect.'

Markelov did not at once reply.

'Nezhdanov,' he said all at once in a low, but despairing voice, 'Nezhdanov! For God's sake come into my house, if only to let me beg on my knees for your forgiveness! Nezhdanov! Forget . . . Alexey! forget, forget my senseless words! Oh, if any one could feel how miserable I am!' Markelov struck himself on the breast with his fist, and it seemed to give forth a hollow groan. 'Alexey! be magnanimous! Give me your hand! . . . Don't refuse to forgive me!'

Nezhdanov held out his hand—irresolutely—still he held it out. Markelov squeezed it so that he almost cried out.

The coachman stopped at the steps of Markelov's house.

'Listen, Alexey,' Markelov was saying to him a quarter of an hour after in his room, . . . 'dear brother,' he kept addressing him by this familiar, endearing term ; and in this affectionate familiarity to the man in whom he had discovered a successful rival, to whom he had only just offered a deadly insult, whom he had been ready to kill, to tear to pieces, there was the expression of irrevocable renunciation, and humble, bitter supplication, and a sort of claim too. . . . Nezhdanov recognised this claim by beginning to address Markelov in the same familiar way.

'Listen, Alexey! I said just now I had refused the happiness of love, renounced it so as to be wholly at the service of my convictions.... That was nonsense, bragging! I have never been offered anything of that sort, I have had nothing to renounce! I was born without gifts, and so I have remained.... And perhaps it was right it should be so. Since I can't attain to that, I have to do something else! Since you can combine both ... can love and be loved ... and at the same time serve the cause ... well, you're a fine fellow! I envy you ... but it's not so with me. I can't. You are happy! You are happy! I can't.'

Markelov said all this in a subdued voice, sitting on a low chair, his head bent and his arms hanging loose at his sides. Nezhdanov stood before him, plunged in a sort of dreamy attention, and though Markelov called him happy, he neither looked nor felt happy.

'I was deceived in my youth,' ... Markelov went on; 'she was an exquisite girl, and yet she jilted me ... and for whom? For a German! for an adjutant! while Marianna——'

He stopped.... For the first time he had uttered her name, and it seemed to burn his lips.

'Marianna did not deceive me; she told me plainly that she didn't care for me. . . . And how should she care for me? Well, she has given herself to you . . . Well, what of that? was she not free?'

'Oh, stay, stay!' cried Nezhdanov, 'what is it you are saying? Given herself? I don't know what your sister has written to you; but I swear to you——'

'I don't say physically; but morally she has given herself, in heart, in soul,' interposed Markelov, who was obviously comforted for some reason or other by Nezhdanov's exclamation. 'And she has done well. As for my sister . . . Of course she had no intention of wounding. . . . At least, she didn't care about it one way or another; but she must hate you, and Marianna too. She was not lying . . . but there, enough of her!'

'Yes,' thought Nezhdanov to himself: 'she hates us.'

'Everything is for the best,' Markelov continued without changing his position. 'Now the last ways of retreat are cut off for me, now there is nothing to hinder me! Never mind Golushkin's being a blockhead; that's of no consequence. And Kislyakov's letters . . . they're absurd, perhaps . . . but we must look to the principal thing. According to him,

everything's ready everywhere. You don't believe that, perhaps?'

Nezhdanov made no answer.

'You are right, perhaps; but you know if we wait for the moment when everything, absolutely everything, is ready, we shall never begin. If one weighs *all* the consequences beforehand, it's certain there will be some evil ones. For instance: when our predecessors organised the emancipation of the peasants, could they foresee that one result of this emancipation would be the rise of a whole class of money-lending landowners, who would lend the peasant a quarter of mouldy rye for six roubles, and extort from him' (here Markelov crooked one finger) 'first the full six roubles in labour, and besides that' (Markelov crooked another finger) 'a whole quarter of good rye, and then' (Markelov crooked a third) 'interest on the top of that?—in fact, they squeeze the peasant to the last drop! Our emancipators couldn't have foreseen that, you must admit! And yet, even if they had foreseen it, they'd have done right to free the peasants, and not to weigh all the consequences! And so, I have made up my mind!'

Nezhdanov looked questioningly, in perplexity, at Markelov; but the latter looked away into the corner. His brows were contracted

and hid his eyes; he bit his lips and gnawed his moustache.

'Yes, I have made up my mind!' he repeated, bringing his dark hairy fist down on his knee. 'I'm an obstinate man, you know . . . I'm not half a Little-Russian for nothing.'

Then he got up, and, staggering as though his legs were failing him, he went into his bedroom, and brought out from there a small portrait of Marianna framed under glass.

'Take it,' he said in a mournful but steady voice; 'I did it once. I draw very badly; but look, I think it's like.' (The sketch, a pencil drawing taken in profile, was really like.) 'Take it, brother; it's my last bequest. Together with this portrait I give up to you all my rights . . . I never had any . . . but you know, Alexey, everything! I give you everything, Alexey . . . and her, dear brother; she's a good . . .'

Markelov paused; the heaving of his breast was visible.

'Take it. You're not angry with me, Alexey? Then take it. I have nothing now . . . I don't want that.' Nezhdanov took the portrait; but a strange sensation oppressed his heart. It seemed to him that he had no right to accept this gift; that if Markelov had known what was in his

Nezhdanov's, heart, he would not, perhaps, have given him the portrait. He held in his hand the little round piece of paper carefully set in its black frame with a mount of gold paper, and he did not know what to do with it. 'Here is a man's whole life in my hand,' was the thought that occurred to him. He realised what a sacrifice Markelov was making, but why, why was it to him? Should he give back the portrait? No! That would be a still crueller affront. . . . And after all, wasn't that face dear to him? didn't he love her?

Nezhdanov with some inward misgiving turned his eyes upon Markelov . . . wasn't he looking at him, trying to read his thoughts? But Markelov was again staring into the corner and gnawing his moustache.

The old servant came into the room with a candle in his hand.

Markelov started.

'It's time for bed, dear Alexey!' he cried. 'Morning brings better counsel. I will give you horses, you will drive home, and good-bye, brother.'

'And good-bye to you, too, old fellow!' he added suddenly, turning to the servant and slapping him on the shoulder. 'Think of me kindly!'

The old man was so astounded that he all

but dropped the candle, and his eyes, bent on his master, expressed something other—and more—than his habitual dejection.

Nezhdanov went to his room. He was miserable. His head was still aching from the wine he had drunk, there were noises in his ears, and lights dazzling before his eyes, even though he shut them. Golushkin, the clerk Vasya, Fomushka, Fimushka, kept revolving before him; in the distance, Marianna's image seemed distrustful, would not come near. Everything he had said or done himself struck him as such lying and affectation, such superfluous and humbugging nonsense . . . and the thing that ought to be done, the aim that ought to be striven for, was not to be found anywhere, unattainable under lock and bar, buried in the bottomless pit. . . .

And he was beset with the unceasing desire to get up, go to Markelov, and say to him, 'Take back your present, take it back!'

'Ugh! what a loathsome thing life is!' he cried at last.

The next morning he went off early. Markelov was already on the steps, surrounded by peasants. Whether he had called them together, or they had come of themselves, Nezhdanov could not make out; Markelov said good-bye to him, very briefly and drily . . .

but he seemed to be about to make some important communication to the peasants. The old servant was hanging about the steps with his unvarying expression.

The coach quickly passed through the town, and moved at a furious pace directly the open country was reached. The horses were the same, but the coachman, either because Nezhdanov was living in a grand house, or for some other reason, was reckoning on something handsome 'for vodka' . . . and we all know that when a coachman has had vodka, or is confidently expecting it, the horses trot their best. It was June weather, though fresh; lofty clouds were gambolling over the sky, there was a strong, steady breeze; the road, after the previous day's rain, was not dusty; the willows rustled, gleamed, and rippled, everything was moving, fluttering; the peewit's cry came whistling from the distant slopes, across the green ravines, just as though the cry had wings and was flying on them; the crows were glossing themselves in the sun; something like black fleas was moving across the straight line of the bare horizon—it was the peasants ploughing their fallow land a second time.

But Nezhdanov let it all pass by unseen; he did not even notice that he was driving into

Sipyagin's property; he was overcome by his brooding thoughts.

He started, though, when he saw the roof of the house, the upper story, Marianna's window. 'Yes,' he said to himself, and there was a glow of warmth about his heart; '*he* was right, she's a good girl, and I love her.'

XXII

HE hurriedly changed his clothes and went to give Kolya his lesson. Sipyagin, whom he met in the dining-room, bowed to him with chilly politeness, and muttering through his teeth, 'Had a pleasant visit?' went on to his study. The statesman had already decided in his diplomatic mind that directly the vacation was over he would promptly pack this tutor off to Petersburg, as he was 'positively too red,' and meanwhile he would keep an eye on him . . . '*Je n'ai pas eu la main heureuse cette fois-ci*,' he thought to himself; however, '*j'aurais pu tomber pire*.' Valentina Mihalovna's sentiments towards Nezhdanov were far more energetic and defined. She could not endure him now. . . . He—this little scrub of a boy!—had affronted her. Marianna had not been mistaken; it was she, Valentina Mihalovna, who had been spying on her and Nezhdanov in the corridor. . . . The distinguished lady was not above such a proceeding. In the course of the

two days his absence had lasted, though she had said nothing to her 'thoughtless' niece, she had repeatedly given her to understand that she was aware of everything; that she would have been indignant, had she not been half-contemptuous, half-compassionate. . . . Her face was filled with restrained, inward contempt, her eyebrows were raised with something of irony and, at the same time, of pity whenever she looked at or spoke to Marianna; her superb eyes rested with tender perplexity, with mournful disgust, on the self-willed girl who, after all her 'fancies and eccentricities,' had come to . . . to . . . to kissing . . . in dark rooms . . . with a paltry little undergraduate!

Poor Marianna! Her stern, proud lips knew nothing as yet of any man's kisses.

Valentina Mihalovna had, however, given her husband no hint of the discovery she had made; she contented herself by accompanying a few words addressed to Marianna in his presence by a significant smile, in no way relevant to their apparent meaning. Valentina Mihalovna felt positively rather remorseful for having written the letter to her brother . . . but, all things considered, she preferred to repent and have done it, than be spared her penitence at the price of the letter not having been written.

Of Marianna, Nezhdanov had a glimpse in

the dining-room at lunch. He thought her looking thin and yellow; she was not at all pretty that day; but the rapid glance she flung at him the instant he came into the room went straight to his heart. On the other hand, Valentina Mihalovna looked at him as though she were continually repeating inwardly, 'I congratulate you! Well done! Very smart!' and at the same time she wanted to discover from his face whether Markelov had shown him the letter or not. She decided at last that he had shown it.

Sipyagin, hearing that Nezhdanov had been to the factory of which Solomin was the manager, began cross-questioning him about 'that manufacturing enterprise which presents so many striking points of interest'; but being shortly convinced from the young man's answers that he had really seen nothing there, he relapsed into majestic silence, with the air of reproaching himself for having expected any valuable information from such an undeveloped person! As they left the dining-room, Marianna managed to whisper to Nezhdanov, 'Wait for me in the old birch copse, Alexey; I will come directly I can get away.' Nezhdanov thought, 'She, too, calls me Alexey, just as he did.' And how sweet that familiarity was to him, though rather terrible too! and how strange, and how incredible, if

she had suddenly begun addressing him as Mr. Nezhdanov again, if she had been more distant to him! He felt that that would be misery to him. Whether he was in love with her he could not be sure yet; but that she was precious to him, and near, and necessary—yes, above all, necessary,—that he felt to the very depths of his being.

The copse to which Marianna had sent him consisted of some hundreds of old birch-trees, mostly of the weeping variety. The wind had not dropped; the long bundles of twigs nodded and tossed like loosened tresses in the breeze; the clouds, as before, flew fast and high up in the sky, and when one of them floated across the sun, everything grew—not dark—but of one uniform tint. Then it floated past, and suddenly glaring patches of light were waving everywhere again, in tangled, medley riot, mingled with patches of shade . . . the rustle and movement were the same; but a kind of festive delight was added. With just such joyous violence, passion makes its way into a heart distraught and darkened by trouble. . . . And just such was the heart Nezhdanov carried within his breast.

He leaned against the trunk of a birch-tree, and began waiting. He did not really know what he was feeling, and indeed he did not want

to know; he felt at once more disturbed and more light of heart than at Markelov's. He longed before all things to see her, to speak to her; the chain which so suddenly binds two living creatures together had him fast just then. Nezhdanov bethought himself of the rope flung to the quay when the ship is ready to be made fast. . . . Now it is twisted tight about a post, and the ship is at rest.

In harbour! God be thanked!

Suddenly he trembled. There was a glimpse of a woman's dress on the path in the distance. It was she. But whether she was coming towards him, or going away from him, he could not be sure, until he saw that the patches of light and shadow glided *from below upwards* over her figure . . . so she was approaching. They would have moved *from above downwards* if she had been walking away. A few instants more and she was standing near him, before him, with a bright face of greeting, a tender light in her eyes, a faint but gay smile on her lips. He snatched her outstretched hands, but at first could not utter a word; she, too, said nothing. She had walked very quickly and was a little out of breath; but it could be seen she was immensely overjoyed that he was overjoyed to see her.

She was the first to speak.

'Well,' she began, 'tell me quickly what you've decided on!'

Nezhdanov was surprised.

'Decided! . . . why, were we to have decided on anything just now?'

'Oh, you know what I mean! Tell me what you talked about. Whom did you see? Have you made friends with Solomin? Tell me everything, everything! Stay a minute—let's go over there, further. I know a place . . . that's not so visible.'

She drew him after her. He followed her obediently right through the tall, scanty, dry grass.

She led him to the place she meant. There lay a great birch-tree that had fallen in a storm. They sat down on the trunk.

'Come, tell me!' she repeated, but she went on herself at once: 'Ah, how glad I am to see you, dear! I thought these two days would never pass. You know, Alexey, I'm certain now that Valentina Mihalovna overheard us.'

'She wrote to Markelov about it,' said Nezhdanov.

'To Markelov!'

Marianna did not speak for a minute, and gradually crimsoned all over, not from shame, but from another stronger passion.

'Wicked, malicious woman!' she murmured

slowly; 'she had no right to do that. . . . Well, never mind! Tell me, tell me everything.'

Nezhdanov began talking. . . . Marianna listened to him with a sort of stony attention, and only interrupted him when she noticed that he was hurrying things over, slurring over incidents. All the details of his visits were not however of equal interest to her; she laughed over Fomushka and Fimushka, but they did not interest her. Their life was too remote from her.

'It's just as if you were telling me about Nebuchadnezzar,' was her comment.

But what Markelov said, what Golushkin even thought (though she soon realised what sort of a creature he was), and, above all, what were Solomin's ideas, and what he was like—these were the points she wanted to hear about, and took to heart. 'When? when?'—that was the question that was continually in her head and on her lips when Nezhdanov was talking, while he seemed to avoid everything which could give a positive answer to that question. He began to notice himself that he laid stress precisely on those incidents which were of least interest to Marianna . . . and was constantly returning to them. Humorous descriptions made her impatient; a sceptical or dejected tone wounded her. . . . He had con-

stantly to come to the 'cause,' the 'question.' Then on that subject no amount of talk wearied her. Nezhdanov was reminded of a summer he had spent with some old friends in the country before he was a student, when he used to tell stories to the children, and they, too, did not appreciate descriptions nor expressions of personal, individual sensation . . . they, too, had demanded action, facts! Marianna was not a child, but in the directness and simplicity of her feelings she was like one.

Nezhdanov praised Markelov with warmth and sincerity, and spoke with special appreciation of Solomin. Speaking almost in enthusiastic terms about him, he asked himself, what precisely was it gave him such a high opinion of that man? He had uttered nothing specially brilliant; some of his sayings seemed indeed directly opposed to his, Nezhdanov's, convictions. . . . 'He's a well-balanced character,' was his conclusion; 'that's it, businesslike, cool, as Fimushka said, a solid fellow; calm, strong force; he knows what he wants, and has confidence in himself, and arouses confidence in others; there's no excitement . . . and balance! balance! . . . That's the great thing; just what I haven't got.' Nezhdanov was silent, absorbed in reflection. . . . Suddenly he felt a caressing hand on his shoulder.

He raised his head; Marianna was looking at him with anxious, tender eyes.

'My dear! What is it?' she asked.

He took her hand from his shoulder, and for the first time kissed that strong little hand. Marianna gave a slight smile as though wondering how such a polite attention could occur to him. Then she in her turn grew thoughtful.

'Did Markelov show you Valentina Mihalovna's letter?' she asked at last.

'Yes.'

'Well . . . how was he?'

'He? He's the noblest, most unselfish fellow! He . . .' Nezhdanov was on the point of telling Marianna about the portrait—but he checked himself, and only repeated, 'the noblest fellow.'

'Oh, yes, yes!'

Marianna again fell to musing, and suddenly turning round towards Nezhdanov on the trunk which served them both for a seat, she said with vivid interest:

'Well, then, what did you decide?'

Nezhdanov shrugged his shoulders.

'Why, I've told you . . . nothing . . . as yet; we shall have to wait a little longer.'

'Wait longer? . . . What for?'

'Final instructions.' ('Of course that's a fib,' Nezhdanov thought.)

'From whom?'

'From . . . you know . . . Vassily Nikolaevitch. And, oh yes, we must wait too till Ostrodumov comes back.'

Marianna looked inquiringly at Nezhdanov.

'Tell me, did you ever see Vassily Nikolaevitch.'

'I have seen him twice . just a glimpse, that was all.'

'What is he? . . . a remarkable man?'

'How shall I tell you? He 's the head now, and controls everything. We couldn't do without discipline in our work; obedience is essential.' ('And that 's all rot,' was his inward comment.)

'What 's he like to look at?'

'Oh, stumpy, heavy, dark. . . . High cheekbones, like a Kalmik . . . a coarse face. Only he has very keen, bright eyes.'

'And how does he talk?'

'He does not talk, so much as command.'

'Why was he made head?'

'Oh, he 's a man of character. He wouldn't stick at anything. If necessary he 'd kill any one. And so he 's feared.'

'And what 's Solomin like?' inquired Marianna, after a short pause.

'Solomin 's not handsome either; only he has a nice, simple, honest face. You see faces

like that among divinity students—the good ones.'

Nezhdanov described Solomin in detail. Marianna gazed a long . . . long time at Nezhdanov; then she said as though to herself: 'You have a good face too; I think life would be sweet with you, Alexey.'

That saying touched Nezhdanov; he took her hand again, and was lifting it to his lips . . .

'Defer your civilities,' said Marianna smiling —she always smiled when her hand was kissed; 'you don't know; I've a sin to confess to you.'

'What have you done?'

'Why, in your absence I went into your room, and there on your table I saw a manuscript book of verses . . .'—(Nezhdanov started; he remembered that he had forgotten the book and left it on the table in his room)— 'and I must confess, I couldn't overcome my curiosity, and I read it. They are your verses, aren't they?'

'Yes; and do you know, Marianna, the best possible proof of how devoted I am to you and how I trust you, is that I'm hardly angry with you.'

'Hardly? Then, however little, you are angry? By the way, you call me Marianna— that's right; I can't call you Nezhdanov, I must call you Alexey. And the poem beginning:

"My dear one, when I come to die," is that yours too?'

'Yes . . . yes. But please leave off. . . . Don't torment me.'

Marianna shook her head.

'It's very melancholy—that poem. . . . I hope you wrote it before you knew me. But it's real poetry so far as I can judge. It seems to me you might have been an author, onlv I know *for certain* that you have a better, higher vocation than literature. It was all very well to be busy with that—before, when nothing else was possible.'

Nezhdanov bent a rapid glance upon her.

'You think so? Yes, I agree with you. Better failure in this than success in the other.'

Marianna rose impulsively.

'Yes, my dearest, you are right!' she cried, and her whole face was radiant, glowing with the fire and light of rapture, with the softening of generous emotion: 'you are right, Alexey! But perhaps we shall not fail at once; we shall succeed, you will see—we shall be useful, our life shall not be spent in vain, we will go and live among the people. . . . Do you know any trade? No? well, never mind, we will work, we will devote to them, our brothers, all we know. I will cook, and sew, and wash, if need be. . . . You shall see, you shall see. . . . And there'll

be no merit in it—but happiness, happiness. . . .' Marianna broke off; but her eyes—fixed eagerly on the distant horizon, not that which spread out before her, but another unseen, unknown horizon perceived by her—her eyes glowed. . . .

Nezhdanov bent down before her.

'O Marianna!' he whispered, 'I 'm not worthy of you!'

She suddenly shook herself.

'It 's time to go home, high time!' she said, 'or they 'll be looking for us again directly. Though Valentina Mihalovna, I think, has given me up. In her eyes I 'm ruined!'

Marianna uttered this word with such a bright and happy face, that Nezhdanov could not help smiling too as he looked at her, and repeated, 'Ruined!'

'But she 's terribly offended,' Marianna went on, 'that you 're not at her feet. But that 's all of no consequence, there 's something I must talk of. . . . You see, it will be impossible for me to stay here. . . . I shall have to run away.'

'Run away?' repeated Nezhdanov.

'Yes, run away. . . . You 're not going to stay, are you? We will go together—we must work together. . . . You 'll come with me, won't you?'

'To the ends of the earth!' cried Nezhdanov, and there was a sudden ring of emotion and a

kind of impetuous gratitude in his voice. 'To the ends of the earth!' At that instant he would certainly have gone with her wherever she wished, without looking back.

Marianna understood him, and gave a short blissful sigh.

'Then take my hand, Alexey, only don't kiss it; and hold it tight, like a comrade, like a friend—there, so!'

They walked together to the house, pensive, blissful; the young grass caressed their feet, the young leaves stirred about them; patches of light and shade flittered swiftly over their garments; and they both smiled at the restless frolic of the light, and the merry bluster of the wind, and the fresh glitter of the leaves, and at their own youth and one another.

PART II

PART II

XXIII

DAWN was already beginning in the sky on the night after Golushkin's dinner, when Solomin, after about four miles of brisk walking, knocked at the gate in the high fence surrounding the factory. The watchman let him in at once, and, followed by three sheep-dogs, vigorously wagging their shaggy tails, he led him with respectful solicitude to his little lodge. He was obviously delighted at his chief's successful return home.

'How is it you're here to-night, Vassily Fedotitch? we didn't expect you till to-morrow.'

'Oh, it's all right, Gavrila; it's nice walking at night.' Excellent, though rather exceptional, relations existed between Solomin and his work-people; they respected him as a superior and behaved with him as an equal, as one of themselves; only in their eyes he was a wonderful scholar! 'What Vassily Fedotitch says,' they

used to repeat, 'is always right! for there's no sort of study he hasn't been through, and there isn't an Anglisher he's not a match for!' Some distinguished English manufacturer had once, as a fact, visited the factory; and either because Solomin spoke English to him, or that he really was impressed by his knowledge of his business, he kept clapping him on the shoulder, and laughing, and inviting him to come to Liverpool to see him; and he declared to the workpeople in his broken Russian, 'Oh, she's very good man, yours here! Oh! very good!' at which the workpeople in their turn laughed heartily, but with some pride; feeling, 'So our man's all that! One of us!'

And he really was one of them, and theirs.

Early the next morning Solomin's favourite, Pavel, came into his room; waked him, poured him water to wash with, told him some piece of news, and asked him some question. Then they had some tea together hurriedly, and Solomin, pulling on his greasy, grey working pea-jacket, went into the factory, and his life began to turn round again, like a huge fly-wheel.

But a fresh break was in store for it.

Five days after Solomin's return to his work, a handsome little phaeton, with four splendid horses harnessed abreast, drove into the factory

yard, and a groom in pale pea-green livery was conducted by Pavel to the lodge, and solemnly handed Solomin a letter, sealed with an armorial crest, from 'His Excellency Boris Andreevitch Sipyagin.' In this letter, which was redolent, not of scent, oh, no! but of a sort of peculiarly distinguished and disgusting English odour, and was written in the third person, not by a secretary but by his Excellency himself, the enlightened owner of the Arzhano estate first apologised for addressing a person with whom he was not personally acquainted, but of whom he, Sipyagin, had heard such flattering accounts. Then he 'ventured' to invite Mr. Solomin to his country seat, as his advice might be of the utmost service to him, Sipyagin, in an industrial undertaking of some magnitude; and in the hope of Mr. Solomin's kindly consenting to do so, he, Sipyagin, was sending his carriage for him. In case it should be impossible for Mr. Solomin to get away that day, he, Sipyagin, most earnestly begged Mr. Solomin to appoint him any other day convenient to him, and he, Sipyagin, would gladly place the same carriage at his, Mr. Solomin's, disposal. There followed the usual civilities, and at the end of the letter was a postscript in the first person, 'I hope you will not refuse to dine with me *quite simply*—not evening dress.' (The words 'quite simply'

were underlined.) Together with this letter the pea-green footman, with a certain show of embarrassment, gave Solomin a simple note, simply stuck up without a seal, from Nezhdanov, which contained only a few words, 'Please come, you are greatly needed here and may be of great service; I need hardly say, not to Mr. Sipyagin.'

On reading Sipyagin's letter, Solomin thought: 'Quite simply! how else should I go? I never had an evening suit in my life. . . . And why the devil should I go trailing out there? . . . it's simple waste of time!' but after a glance at Nezhdanov's note, he scratched his head, and walked to the window, irresolute.

'What answer are you graciously pleased to send?' the pea-green footman questioned sedately.

Solomin stood a moment longer at the window, and at last, shaking back his hair and passing his hand over his forehead, he said, 'I will come. Let me have time to dress.'

The footman with well-bred discretion withdrew, and Solomin sent for Pavel, had some talk with him, ran over once more to the factory, and, putting on a black coat with a very long waist, made him by a provincial tailor, and a rather rusty top-hat, which at once gave a wooden expression to his face, he seated himself in the phaeton, then suddenly remembered

he had taken no gloves, and called the ubiquitous Pavel, who brought him a pair of white chamois-leather gloves, recently washed, every finger of which had stretched at the tip and looked like a finger-biscuit. Solomin stuffed the gloves into his pocket, and said they could drive on. Then the footman with a sudden, quite unnecessary swiftness leaped on to the box, the well-trained coachman gave a shrill whistle, and the horses went off at a trot.

While they were gradually carrying Solomin to Sipyagin's estate, that statesman was sitting in his drawing-room with a half-cut political pamphlet on his knee, talking about him to his wife. He confided to her that he had really written to him with the object of trying whether he couldn't entice him away from the merchant's factory to his own, as it was in a very bad way indeed, and radical reforms were needed! The idea that Solomin would refuse to come, or even fix another day, Sipyagin could not entertain for an instant; though he had himself offered Solomin a choice of days in his letter.

'But ours are paper-mills, not cotton-spinning, you know,' observed Valentina Mihalovna.

'It 's all the same, my love; there 's machinery in the one and machinery in the other . . . and he 's a mechanician.'

'But perhaps he 's a specialist, you know!'

'My love—in the first place, there are no specialists in Russia; and, secondly, I repeat he's a mechanician!'

Valentina Mihalovna smiled.

'Take care, my dear; you've been unlucky once already with young men; mind you don't make a second mistake!'

'You mean Nezhdanov? But I consider I attained my object any way; he's an excellent teacher for Kolya. And besides, you know, *non bis in idem!* Pardon my pedantry, please. . . . That means, facts don't repeat themselves.'

'You think not? But I think everything in the world repeats itself . . . especially what's in the nature of things . . . and especially with young people.'

'*Que voulez-vous dire?*' asked Sipyagin, flinging the pamphlet on the table with a graceful gesture.

'*Ouvrez les yeux, et vous verrez!*' Madame Sipyagin answered him; speaking French, of course, to one another, they said '*vous.*'

'H'm!' commented Sipyagin. 'Are you alluding to the student fellow?'

'To *Monsieur le* student—yes.'

'H'm! has he got . . .' (he moved his hand about his forehead . . .) 'anything afoot here? Eh?'

'Open your eyes!'

'Marianna? Eh?' (The second 'eh?' was decidedly more nasal than the first.)

'Open your eyes, I tell you!'

Sipyagin frowned.

'Well, we will go into all that later on. Just now I only wanted to say one thing. . . . This fellow will probably be rather uncomfortable . . . of course, that's natural enough, he's not used to society. So we shall have to be rather friendly with him . . . so as not to alarm him. I don't mean that for you; you're a perfect treasure, and you can captivate any one in no time, if you choose to. *J'en sais quelque chose, Madame!* I mention it in regard to other people; for instance, our friend there.'

He pointed to a fashionable grey hat lying on a whatnot; the hat belonged to Mr. Kallomyetsev, who happened to be at Arzhano early that morning.

'*Il est très cassant,* you know; he has such an intense contempt for the people, a thing of which I deeply disapprove! I've noticed in him, too, for some time past, a certain irritability and quarrelsomeness. . . . Is his little affair in that quarter' (Sipyagin nodded his head in some undefined direction, but his wife understood him) 'not getting on well? Eh?'

'Open your eyes! I tell you again.'

Sipyagin got up.

'Eh?' (This 'eh?' was of an utterly different character, and in a different tone . . . much lower.) 'You don't say so! I may open them too wide; they'd better be careful.'

'That's for you to say; but as to your new young man, if only he comes to-day you needn't worry yourself—every precaution shall be taken.'

And after all, it turned out that no precaution was at all needed. Solomin was not in the least uncomfortable or alarmed. When the servant announced his arrival, Sipyagin at once got up, called out loudly so that it could be heard in the hall, 'Ask him up, of course, ask him up!' went to the drawing-room door and stood right in front of it. Solomin was scarcely through the doorway when Sipyagin, whom he almost knocked up against, held out both hands to him, and, smiling affably and nodding his head, said cordially, 'This is indeed good . . . on your part! . . . how grateful I am!' and led him up to Valentina Mihalovna.

'This is my good wife,' he said, softly pressing his hand against Solomin's back, and, as it were, impelling him towards Valentina Mihalovna; 'here, my dear, is our leading mechanician and manufacturer, Vassily . . . Fedosyevitch Solomin.'

Madame Sipyagin rose and, with a beautiful upward quiver of her exquisite eyelashes, first smiled to him—simply—as to a friend; then held out her little hand, palm uppermost, her elbow pressed against her waist, and her head bent in the direction of her hand . . . in the attitude of a suppliant. Solomin let both husband and wife play off their little tricks upon him, shook hands with both, and took a seat at the first invitation to do so. Sipyagin began to fuss about him: 'Wouldn't he take something?' But Solomin replied that he did not want anything, wasn't in the least fatigued with the journey, and was completely at his disposal.

'You mean I may ask you to visit the factory?' cried Sipyagin, as though quite overcome, and not daring to believe in such condescension on the part of his guest.

'At once,' answered Solomin.

'Ah, how good you are! Shall I order the carriage? or perhaps you would prefer to walk? . . .'

'Why, it's not far from here, I suppose, your factory?'

'Half a mile, not more.'

'Then why order the carriage?'

'Ah, that's delightful, then! Boy, my hat, my stick, at once! And you, little missis,

bestir yourself, and have a good dinner ready for us. My hat!'

Sipyagin was far more perturbed than his visitor. Repeating once more, 'But where's my hat?' he, the great dignitary, bustled out of the room like a frolicsome schoolboy. While he was talking to Solomin, Valentina Mihalovna was looking stealthily but intently at this 'new young man.' He was sitting calmly in his easy-chair, with his bare hands (he had not, after all, put on the gloves) lying on his knees, and calmly, though with curiosity, looking about at the furniture and the pictures. 'How is it?' she thought; 'he is a plebeian . . . an unmistakable plebeian . . . but how naturally he behaves!'

Solomin did certainly behave very naturally, and not as some do, who are simple indeed, but with a sort of intensity, as though to say, 'Look at me, understand what sort of a man I am,' but like a man whose feelings and ideas are strong without being complex. Madam Sipyagin wanted to enter into conversation with him, but, to her amazement, could not at once find anything suitable to say.

'Good heavens!' she thought, 'can I be impressed by this workman?'

'Boris Andreitch ought to be very grateful

to you,' she said at last, 'for consenting to devote part of your valuable time to him. . . .'

'It's not so valuable as all that, madam,' answered Solomin; 'and I'm not come to you for very long.'

'*Voilà où l'ours a montré sa patte*,' she thought in French, but at that instant her husband appeared in the open doorway, with his hat on and his stick in his hand.

Turning half round, he cried with a free and easy air: 'Vassily Fedosyevitch! Ready to start?'

Solomin got up, bowed to Valentina Mihalovna, and walked out behind Sipyagin.

'Follow me, this way, this way, Vassily Fedosyevitch!' Sipyagin called, just as though he were going through a forest and Solomin needed a guide. 'This way! there are steps here, Vassily Fedosyevitch.'

'When you are pleased to call me by my father's name,' Solomin observed deliberately, . . . 'I'm not Fedosyevitch, but Fedotitch.'

Sipyagin looked back at him over his shoulder, almost in affright.

'Ah! I beg your pardon, indeed, Vassily Fedotitch.'

'Not at all; no occasion.'

They went into the courtyard. They happened to meet Kallomyetsev.

'Where are you off to?' he inquired, looking askance at Solomin; 'to the factory? *C'est là l'individu en question?*'

Sipyagin opened his eyes wide and slightly shook his head by way of warning.

'Yes, to the factory . . . to show my sins and transgressions to this gentleman—the mechanician. Let me introduce you: Mr. Kallomyetsev, our neighbour here; Mr. Solomin. . . .'

Kallomyetsev nodded his head twice, hardly perceptibly, not at all in Solomin's direction, without looking at him. But he looked at Kallomyetsev, and there was a gleam of something in his half-closed eyes.

'May I join you?' asked Kallomyetsev. 'You know I like instruction.'

'Of course you may.'

They went out of the courtyard into the road, and had not gone twenty steps when they saw the parish priest in a cassock, hitched up into the belt, making his way home to the so-called 'pope's quarter.' Kallomyetsev promptly left his two companions, and with long, resolute strides approached the priest, who was not at all expecting this and was rather disconcerted, asked his blessing, deposited a sounding kiss on his moist red hand, and, turning to Solomin, flung him a challenging glance. He obviously

knew 'a fact or two' about him, and wanted to show off and to display his contempt for this learned rascal.

'*C'est une manifestation, mon cher?*' Sipyagin muttered through his teeth.

Kallomyetsev gave a snort.

'*Oui, mon cher, une manifestation nécessaire par le temps qui court!*'

They went into the factory. They were met by a Little Russian with an immense beard and false teeth, who had succeeded the former superintendent, the German, when Sipyagin finally dismissed him. This Little Russian was a temporary substitute; he obviously knew nothing of the business, and could do nothing but sigh and incessantly repeat 'Maybe' . . . and 'Just so.'

The inspection of the establishment began. Some of the factory hands knew Solomin by sight and bowed to him . . . and to one of them he even said, 'Hullo, Grigory! you here?' He soon saw that the business was badly managed. Money had been laid out profusely but injudiciously. The machines turned out to be of poor quality; many were unnecessary and useless; many that were needed were lacking. Sipyagin kept constantly looking at Solomin's face to guess his opinion, put some timid questions, wished to know if he were pleased, at any rate, with the system.

'The system's all right,' answered Solomin, 'but can it give any return? I doubt it.'

Not Sipyagin only, but even Kallomyetsev, felt that Solomin was, as it were, at home in the factory, that everything in it was thoroughly familiar to him and understood to the smallest detail—that here he was master. He laid his hand on a machine as a driver lays his hand on a horse's neck; he poked his fingers into a wheel and it stopped moving or began going round; he scooped up in his hand out of the vat a little of the pulp of which the paper was made, and at once it revealed all its defects. Solomin said little, and did not even look at the Little Russian at all; in silence, too, he walked out of the factory. Sipyagin and Kallomyetsev followed him.

Sipyagin did not tell any one to accompany him . . . he positively stamped and gnashed his teeth. He was very much disturbed.

'I see by your face,' he said, addressing Solomin, 'that you're not pleased with my factory, and I know myself that it's in an unsatisfactory state and unprofitable; however, . . . please don't scruple to speak out . . . what are really its most important shortcomings? And what is to be done to improve it?'

'Paper-making's not in my line,' answered

Solomin, 'but one thing I can tell you—industrial undertakings aren't the thing for gentlemen.'

'You regard such pursuits as degrading for gentlemen?' interposed Kallomyetsev.

Solomin smiled his broad smile.

'Oh, no! What an idea! What is there degrading about it? And even if there were, the gentry aren't squeamish as to that, you know.'

'Eh? What's that?'

'I only meant,' Solomin resumed tranquilly, 'that gentlemen aren't used to that sort of business. Commercial foresight is needed for that; everything has to be put on a different footing; you need training for it. The gentry don't understand that. We see them right and left founding cloth factories, wool factories, and all sorts, but in the long-run all these factories fall into the hands of merchants. It's a pity, for the merchant's just as much of a blood-sucker; but there's no help for it.'

'To listen to you,' cried Kallomyetsev, 'one would suppose financial questions were beyond our nobility!'

'Oh, quite the contrary! the gentry are first-rate hands at that. For getting concessions for railroads, founding banks, begging some tax-exemption for themselves, or anything of

that sort, none are a match for the gentry. They accumulate great capitals. I hinted at that just now, when you were pleased to take offence at it. But I was thinking of regular industrial enterprises. I say *regular*, because founding private taverns and petty truck-shops and lending the peasants wheat or money at a hundred and a hundred and fifty per cent., as so many of our landowning gentry are doing now—operations like that I can't regard as genuine commercial business.'

Kallomyetsev made no reply. He belonged to just that new species of money-lending landowner whom Markelov had referred to in his last talk with Nezhdanov, and he was the more inhuman in his extortions that he never had any personal dealings with the peasants; he did not admit them into his perfumed European study, but did business with them through an agent. As he listened to Solomin's deliberate, as it were, impartial speech, he was raging inwardly . . . but he was silent this time, and only the working of the muscles of his face betrayed what was passing within him.

'But, Vassily Fedotitch, allow me—allow me,' began Sipyagin. 'All that you are expressing was a perfectly just criticism in former days, when the nobility enjoyed . . . totally different privileges, and were altogether in

another position. But nowadays, after all the beneficial reforms . . . in our industrial age, why cannot the nobility turn their energies and abilities into such enterprises? Why should they be unable to understand what is understood by the simple, often unlettered, merchant? They don't suffer from lack of education, and one may even claim with confidence that they are in some sense the representatives of enlightenment and progress.'

Boris Andreevitch spoke very well; his fluency would have had great effect in Petersburg—in his department—or even in higher quarters, but on Solomin it produced no impression whatever.

'The gentry cannot manage these things,' he repeated.

'And why not? why?' Kallomyetsev almost shouted.

'Because they will always remain mere officials.'

'Officials?' Kallomyetsev laughed malignantly. 'You don't quite realise what you are saying, I fancy, Mr. Solomin.' Solomin still smiled as before.

'What makes you fancy that, Mr. Kolomentsev?' (Kallomyetsev positively shuddered at such a "mutilation" of his surname.) 'No, I always fully realise what I am saying.'

'Then explain what you meant by your last expression.'

'Certainly; in my idea, every official is an outsider, and has always been so, and the gentry have now *become* outsiders.'

Kallomyetsev laughed still more.

'I beg your pardon, my dear sir; that I can't make head or tail of!'

'So much the worse for you. Make a great effort . . . perhaps you will understand it.'

'Sir!'

'Gentlemen, gentlemen,' Sipyagin interposed hurriedly with an air of searching earnestly about him for some one. 'If you please, if you please . . . *Kallomyetsev, je vous prie de vous calmer.* And dinner will be ready soon, to be sure. Pray, gentlemen, follow me!'

'Valentina Mihalovna!' whined Kallomyetsev, running into her boudoir five minutes later, 'it's really beyond everything what your husband is doing! One Nihilist installed here among you already, and now he's bringing in another! And this one's the worst!'

'How so?'

'Upon my word, he's advocating the deuce knows what; and besides—observe one thing: he has been talking to your husband for a whole hour, and *never once, not once,* did he say, Your Excellency! *Le vagabond!*'

XXIV

BEFORE dinner Sipyagin called his wife aside into the library. He wanted to have a talk with her alone. He seemed worried. He told her that the factory was distinctly coming to grief, that this man Solomin struck him as a very capable fellow, though a trifle . . . abrupt, and that they must continue to be *aux petits soins* with him. 'Ah! if we could only persuade him to come, what a good thing it would be!' he repeated twice. Sipyagin was much irritated at Kallomyetsev's presence. . . . 'The devil brought him! He sees Nihilists on every side, and thinks of nothing but suppressing them. He's welcome to suppress them at home. He positively can't hold his tongue!'

Valentina Mihalovna observed that she would be delighted to be *aux petits soins* with this new guest, only he seemed not to care for these *petits soins* and not to notice them; not that he was rude, but very cool in a sort of way, which was extremely remarkable in a man *du commun*.

'Never mind . . . do your best!' Sipyagin besought her. Valentina Mihalovna promised to do her best, and she did do her best. She began by talking *en tête-à-tête* to Kallomyetsev. There is no knowing what she said to him, but he came to table with the air of a man who has 'undertaken' to be discreet and submissive whatever he may have to listen to. This opportune 'resignation' gave his whole bearing a shade of slight melancholy; but what dignity . . . oh! what dignity there was in every one of his movements! Valentina Mihalovna introduced Solomin to all the family circle (he looked at Marianna with most attention), and made him sit beside her, on her right hand, at dinner. Kallomyetsev was seated on her left. As he unfolded his napkin, he pursed up his face with a smile that seemed to say, 'Come, now, let us go through our little farce!' Sipyagin sat facing him, and with some anxiety kept an eye on him. By Madame Sipyagin's rearrangement of the seats at table, Nezhdanov was placed not beside Marianna, but between Anna Zaharovna and Sipyagin. Marianna found her card (for the dinner was a ceremonious affair) on the dinner-napkin between Kallomyetsev and Kolya. The dinner was served in great style; there was even a *menu*—a decorated card lay beside each knife and

fork. Immediately after the soup, Sipyagin turned the conversation again on his factory, and on manufacturing industry in Russia generally; Solomin, after his habit, answered very briefly. As soon as he began to speak, Marianna's eyes were fastened upon him. Kallomyetsev, as he sat beside her, had begun by addressing various compliments to her (seeing that he had been specially begged 'not to provoke an argument'), but she was not listening to him; and indeed he uttered these civilities in a half-hearted fashion to satisfy his conscience: he realised that there was some barrier between the young girl and him that he could not get over.

As for Nezhdanov, something still worse had come into existence between him and the head of the house. . . . For Sipyagin, Nezhdanov had become simply a piece of furniture, or an empty space, which he utterly —it seemed utterly—failed to remark! These new relations had taken shape so quickly and unmistakably, that when Nezhdanov during dinner uttered a few words in reply to an observation of his neighbour, Anna Zaharovna, Sipyagin looked round wonderingly as though asking himself, 'Where does that sound come from?'

Obviously Sipyagin possessed some of the

characteristics that distinguish Russians of the very highest position.

After the fish, Valentina Mihalovna—who for her part had been lavishing all her arts and graces on her right, that is, on Solomin—remarked in English to her husband across the table that 'our guest drinks no wine, perhaps he would like beer. . . .' Sipyagin called loudly for 'ale,' while Solomin turning quietly to Valentina Mihalovna said, 'You don't know, madam, I expect, that I spent over two years in England, and can understand and speak English; I tell you this in case you might want to speak of something private before me.' Valentina Mihalovna laughed and began to assure him this precaution was quite unnecessary, since he would hear nothing but good of himself; inwardly she thought Solomin's action rather queer, but delicate in its own way.

At this point Kallomyetsev broke out at last.

'So you have been in England,' he began, 'and probably you studied the manners and customs there. Allow me to inquire, did you think they were worth imitating?'

'Some, yes; some, no.'

'That's short, and not clear,' observed Kallomyetsev, trying not to notice the signs Sipyagin was making to him. 'But you were

speaking this morning about the nobles. . . . You have doubtless had an opportunity of studying what's called in England the *landed gentry* on the spot?'

'No; I had no such opportunity: I moved in a totally different sphere, but I formed a notion of these gentlemen for myself.'

'Well, do you imagine that such a *landed gentry* is impossible among us, and that in any case we ought not to wish for it?'

'In the first place, I certainly do imagine it to be impossible, and, secondly, I think it's not worth while wishing for it either.'

'Why so, my dear sir?' said Kallomyetsev. The last three words were by way of soothing Sipyagin, who was very uneasy and could not sit still in his chair.

'Because in twenty or thirty years your *landed gentry* will cease to exist any way.'

'But, really, why so, my dear sir?'

'Because by that time the land will have come into the hands of owners, without distinction of rank.'

'Merchants?'

'Probably merchants; mostly.'

'How will that be?'

'Why, by their buying it—the land, I mean.'

'Of the nobles?'

'Yes, the nobles.'

Kallomyetsev gave a condescending smirk. 'You said the very same thing before, I remember, of mills and factories, and now you say it of the whole of the land.'

'Yes, I say the same now of the whole of the land.'

'And you will be very glad of it, I suppose?'

'Not at all, as I have explained to you already; the people will be no better off for it.'

Kallomyetsev faintly raised one hand. 'What solicitude for the people's welfare, only fancy!'

'Vassily Fedotitch!' cried Sipyagin at the top of his voice. 'They have brought you some beer! *Voyons, Siméon!*' he added in an undertone.

But Kallomyetsev would not be quiet.

'You have not, I see,' he began again, addressing Solomin, 'an over-flattering opinion of the merchants; but they belong by extraction to the people, don't they?'

'And so?'

'I supposed that everything relating to the people or derived from the people would be good in your eyes.'

'Oh, no, sir! You were mistaken in supposing that. Our people are open to reproach in many ways, though they're not always in the

wrong. The merchant among us so far is a brigand; he uses his own private property for brigandage. . . . What's he to do? He's exploited and he exploits. As for the people——'

'The people?' queried Kallomyetsev in high falsetto.

'The people . . . are asleep.'

'And you would wake them?'

'That wouldn't be amiss.'

'Aha! aha! so that's what——'

'Excuse me, excuse me,' Sipyagin pronounced imperiously. He realised that the instant had come to draw the line, so to speak . . . to close the discussion. And he drew the line! He closed the discussion! With a wave of his right hand from the wrist, while his elbow remained propped on the table, he delivered a long and detailed speech. On one side he commended the conservatives, on the other approved of the liberals, awarding some preference to the latter, reckoning himself among their number; he extolled the people, but referred to some of their weak points; expressed complete confidence in the government, but asked himself whether *all* subordinate officials were fully carrying out its benevolent designs. He recognised the service and the dignity of literature, but de-

clared that without the utmost caution it was inadmissible! He looked towards the east; first rejoiced, then was dubious: looked towards the west; first was apathetic, then suddenly waked up! Finally, he proposed a toast in honour of the trinity: 'Religion, Agriculture, and Industry!'

'Under the ægis of power!' Kallomyetsev added severely.

'Under the ægis of wise and indulgent authority,' Sipyagin amended.

The toast was drunk in silence. The empty space to the left of Sipyagin, known as Nezhdanov, did, it is true, give vent to some sound of disapprobation, but, evoking no notice, it relapsed into silence; and the dinner reached a satisfactory conclusion, undisturbed by any controversy.

Valentina Mihalovna, with the most charming smile, handed Solomin a cup of coffee; he drank it, and was already looking for his hat . . . but, softly taken by the arm by Sipyagin, was promptly drawn away into his study, and received first a most excellent cigar, and then a proposal that he should enter his, Sipyagin's factory, on the most advantageous terms! 'You shall be absolute master, Vassily Fedotitch, absolute master!' The cigar Solomin accepted; the proposal he refused. He posi-

tively stuck to his refusal, however much Sipyagin insisted.

'Don't say "No" straight off, dear Vassily Fedotitch. Say at least that you'll think it over till to-morrow!'

'But that would make no difference. I can't accept your offer.'

'Till to-morrow! Vassily Fedotitch! what harm will it do to defer your decision?'

Solomin admitted that it would certainly do him no harm . . . he left the study, however, and again went in search of his hat. But Nezhdanov, who had not till that instant succeeded in exchanging a single word with him, drew near and hurriedly whispered: 'For mercy's sake, don't go away, or it will be impossible for us to have a talk.'

Solomin left his hat alone, the more readily as Sipyagin observing his irresolute movements up and down the drawing-room, cried, 'You'll stay the night with us, of course?'

'I am at your disposal,' answered Solomin.

The grateful glance flung at him by Marianna —she was standing at the drawing-room window —set him musing.

XXV

MARIANNA had pictured Solomin to herself as utterly different, before his visit. At first sight he had struck her as somehow undefined, lacking in individuality. . . . She had seen plenty of fair-haired, sinewy, thin men like that, she told herself! But the more she watched him, the more she listened to what he said, the stronger grew her feeling of confidence in him—confidence was just what it was.

This calm, heavy, not to say clumsy man was not only incapable of lying or bragging; one might rely on him, like a stone wall. . . . He would not betray one; more than that, he would understand one and support one. Marianna even fancied that this was not only her feeling—that Solomin was producing the same effect on every one present. To what he said, she attached no special significance; all this talk of merchants and factories had little interest for her; but the way he talked, the way he looked and smiled as he talked, she liked immensely. . . .

A truthful man . . . that was the great thing! that was what touched her. It is a well-known fact, though by no means easy to understand, that Russians are the greatest liars on the face of the earth, and yet there is nothing they respect like truth—nothing attracts them so much. Besides, Solomin was of a quite especial stamp, in Marianna's eyes; on him rested the halo of a man recommended by Vassily Nikolaevitch himself to his followers. During dinner Marianna had several times exchanged glances with Nezhdanov in reference to him, and in the end she suddenly caught herself in an involuntary comparison of the two men, and not to Nezhdanov's advantage. Nezhdanov's features were undoubtedly far handsomer and more pleasing than Solomin's; but his face expressed a medley of distracting emotions; vexation, embarrassment, impatience . . . even despondency; he seemed sitting on thorns, tried to speak, and broke off, laughing nervously. . . . Solomin, on the other hand, produced the impression of being, very likely, a little bored, but, any way, quite at home; and of being, in what he did or felt, at all times utterly independent of what other people might do or feel. 'Decidedly, we must ask advice of this man,' was Marianna's thought; 'he will be sure to

give us some good advice.' It was she who had sent Nezhdanov to him after dinner.

The evening passed rather drearily; luckily dinner was not over till late, and there was not much time to get through before night. Kallomyetsev was politely sulky and said nothing.

'What's the matter?' Madame Sipyagin asked him half-jeeringly. 'Have you lost something?'

'That's just it,' answered Kallomyetsev. 'They tell a story of one of our commanders of the guards that he used to complain that his soldiers had lost their socks. "Find me that sock!" And I say, find me the word "sir"! That word "sir" has gone astray, and all proper respect and reverence for rank have gone with it!'

Madame Sipyagin declared to Kallomyetsev that she was not prepared to assist him in his quest of it.

Emboldened by the success of his 'speech' at dinner, Sipyagin delivered a couple of other harangues, letting drop as he did so a few statesmanlike reflections on indispensable measures; he dropped also a few sayings —*des mots*—more weighty than witty, he had specially prepared for Petersburg. One of these sayings he even said over twice, pre-

fixing the phrase, 'if I may be permitted so to express myself.' It was a criticism of one of the ministers of the day, of whom he said that he had a fickle and frivolous intellect, bent on visionary aims. On the other hand Sipyagin, not forgetting that he had to deal with a Russian—one of the people—did not fail to knock off a few sayings, intended to prove that he was himself, not merely Russian in blood, but a real Russian bear, every inch of him, and in close touch with the very inmost essence of the national life! Thus, for example, upon Kallomyetsev observing that the rain might delay getting in the hay, he promptly rejoined, 'Let the hay be black, for then the buckwheat'll be white'; he used proverbial terms such as, 'A store masterless is a child fatherless'; 'Try on ten times, for once you cut out'; 'Where there is corn, you can always find a bushel'; 'If the leaves on the birch are big as farthings by St. Yegor's day, there'll be corn in the barn by the feast of Our Lady of Kazan.' It must be admitted that he sometimes got them wrong, and would say, for instance, 'Let the carpenter stick to his last!' or 'Fine houses make full bellies!' But the society in which these mishaps befell did not for the most part even suspect that '*notre bon Russe*' had blundered; and

indeed, thanks to Prince Kovrizhkin, it is pretty well inured to such Russian malapropisms. And all these saws and sayings Sipyagin would enunciate in a peculiar hale and hearty, almost thick, voice, '*d'une voix rustique.*' Such idioms, dropped in due place and season at Petersburg, set influential ladies of the highest position exclaiming, '*Comme il connaît bien les mœurs de notre peuple!*' While equally influential dignitaries of equally high position would add, '*Les mœurs et les besoins!*'

Valentina Mihalovna did her very best with Solomin; but the obvious failure of her efforts disheartened her; and as she passed Kallomyetsev she could not resist mumuring in an undertone, '*Mon Dieu, que je me sens fatiguée!*'

To which the latter responded, with an ironical bow, '*Tu l'as voulu, Georges Dandin!*'

At last, after the usual flicker-up of politeness and affability, displayed on all the faces of a bored assembly at the moment of breaking up, after abrupt handshaking, smiles and amiable simpers, the weary guests and weary hosts separated.

Solomin, who was conducted to almost the best bedchamber on the second floor, with English toilet accessories and a bathroom attached, made his way to Nezhdanov.

The latter began by thanking him warmly for consenting to stay the night.

'I know . . . it's a sacrifice for you. . . .'

'Oh, nonsense!' Solomin responded in his deliberate tones; 'much of a sacrifice! Besides, I can't say no to you.'

'Why so?'

'Oh, because I like you.'

Nezhdanov was delighted and astounded, while Solomin pressed his hand. Then he seated himself astride on a chair, lighted a cigar, and, with both elbows on the chair-back, he observed, 'Come, tell me what's the matter.'

Nezhdanov, too, seated himself astride on a chair facing Solomin, but he did not light a cigar.

'What's the matter, you ask? . . . The matter is that I want to run away from here.'

'That is, you want to leave this house? Well, what of it? Good luck to you!'

'Not to leave . . . but to run away.'

'Why? do they detain you? You . . . perhaps you've received some salary in advance? If so, you need only say the word. . . . I should be delighted.'

'You don't understand me, my dear Solomin. . . . I said, run away—not leave—because I'm not going away from here alone.'

Solomin raised his head.

'With whom?'

'With that girl you saw here to-day. . . .'

'That girl! She has a nice face. You love one another, eh? . . . Or is it simply, you have made up your minds to go away together from a house where you are both unhappy?'

'We love one another.'

'Ah!' Solomin was silent for a while. 'Is she a relation of the people here?'

'Yes. But she fully shares our convictions, and is ready to go forward.'

Solomin smiled.

'And are you ready, Nezhdanov?'

Nezhdanov frowned slightly.

'Why that question? I will prove my readiness in action.'

'I have no doubts of you, Nezhdanov. I only asked because I imagine there is no one ready besides you.'

'What of Markelov?'

'Yes, to be sure, there is Markelov; but he, I expect, was born ready.'

At that instant some one gave a light, rapid tap at the door, and, without waiting for an answer, opened it. It was Marianna. She went up at once to Solomin.

'I am sure,' she began, 'you will not be surprised at seeing me here at such an hour. . . . He' (Marianna indicated Nezhdanov) 'has

told you everything, of course. Give me your hand, and, believe me, it is an honest girl standing before you.'

'Yes, I know that,' Solomin responded seriously. He had risen from his seat when Marianna appeared. 'I was looking at you at dinner-time and thinking, "What honest eyes that young lady has!" Nezhdanov has been telling me, certainly, of your plan. But why do you mean to run away, exactly?'

'Why? The cause I have at heart . . . don't be surprised; Nezhdanov has kept nothing from me . . . that work is bound to begin in a few days . . . and am I to remain in this aristocratic house, where everything is deceit and lying? People I love will be exposed to danger, and am I——'

Solomin stopped her by a motion of his hand.

'Don't upset yourself. Sit down, and I'll sit down. You sit down, too, Nezhdanov. Let me tell you, if you have no other reason, then there's no need for you to run away from here as yet. That work isn't going to begin as soon as you suppose. A little more prudent consideration is needed in that matter. It's no good blundering forward at random. Believe me.'

Marianna sat down and wrapped herself up

in a big plaid, which she flung over her shoulders.

'But I can't stay here any longer. I'm insulted by every one here. Only to-day that imbecile, Anna Zaharovna, said before Kolya, alluding to my father, that the apple never falls far from the apple-tree. Kolya even was surprised, and asked what that meant. Not to speak of Valentina Mihalovna!'

Solomin stopped her again, and this time with a smile. Marianna realised that he was laughing at her a little, but his smile could never have offended any one.

'What do you mean, dear lady? I don't know who that Anna Zaharovna may be, nor what apple-tree you are talking about . . . but come, now; some fool of a woman says something foolish to you, and can't you put up with it? How are you going to get through life? The whole world rests on fools. No, that's not a reason. Is there anything else?'

'I am convinced,' Nezhdanov interposed in a thick voice, 'that Mr. Sipyagin will turn me out of the house of himself in a day or two. He has certainly been told tales. He treats me . . . in the most contemptuous fashion.'

Solomin turned to Nezhdanov.

'Then what would you run away for, if you'll be turned away in any case?'

Nezhdanov did not at once find a reply.

'I was telling you before——' he began.

'He used that expression,' put in Marianna, 'because I am going with him.'

Solomin looked at her, and shook his head good-humouredly.

'Yes, yes, my dear young lady; but I tell you again, if you are meaning to leave this house just because you suppose the revolution is going to break out directly——'

'That's what we wrote for you to come for, Marianna interrupted, 'to find out for certain what position things are in.'

'In that case,' pursued Solomin, 'I repeat, you can stop at home—a good bit longer. If you mean to run away because you love each other and you can't be united otherwise, then——'

'Well, what then?'

'Then it only remains for me to wish you, as the old-fashioned saying is, love and good counsel, and, if need be and can be, to give you any help in my power. Because, my dear young lady, you, and him too, I've loved from first sight as if you were my own brother and sister.'

Marianna and Nezhdanov both went up to him on the right and the left, and each clasped one of his hands.

'Only tell us what to do,' said Marianna.

'Supposing the revolution is still far off . . . there are preparatory steps to be taken, work to be done, impossible in this house, in these surroundings, to which we should go so eagerly together . . . you point them out to us, you only tell us where we are to go. . . . Send us! You will send us, won't you?'

'Where?'

'To the peasants. . . Where should we go, if not to the people?'

'Into the forest,' thought Nezhdanov. . . . Paklin's saying recurred to his mind. Solomin looked intently at Marianna.

'You want to get to know the people?'

'Yes; that is, we don't only want to get to know the people, but to influence . . . to work for them.'

'Very good; I promise you, you shall get to know them. I will give you a chance of influencing them and working for them. And you, Nezhdanov, are ready to go . . . for her . . . and for them?'

'Of course I am ready,' he declared hurriedly. 'Juggernaut,' another saying of Paklin's, recurred to him; 'here it comes rolling along, the huge chariot . . . and I hear the crash and rumble of its wheels. . . .'

'Very good,' Solomin repeated thoughtfully. 'But when do you intend to run away?'

'Why not to-morrow?' cried Marianna.

'Very good—but where?'

'Sh . . . gently . . .' whispered Nezhdanov. 'Some one is coming along the corridor.'

They were all silent for a space.

'Where do you intend to go?' Solomin asked again, dropping his voice.

'We don't know,' answered Marianna.

Solomin turned his eyes upon Nezhdanov. The latter merely shook his head negatively.

Solomin stretched out his hand and carefully snuffed the candle.

'I tell you what, my children,' he said at last, 'come to my factory. It's nasty there . . . but very safe. I will hide you. I have a little room there. No one will find you out. You need only get there . . . and we won't give you up. You will say, "There are a lot of people at the factory." That's a very good thing. Where there are a lot of people it's easy to hide. Will that do, eh?'

'We can only thank you,' said Nezhdanov; while Marianna, who had at first been taken aback by the idea of the factory, added quickly: 'Of course, of course. How good you are! But you won't leave us there long, I suppose? You will send us on?'

'That will depend on you. . . . But in case you meant to get married, it would be very

convenient for you at the factory. Close by I've a neighbour there—he's a cousin of mine—a parish priest, by name Zosim, very amenable. He would marry you with all the pleasure in life.'

Marianna smiled to herself, while Nezhdanov once more pressed Solomin's hand, and after a moment's pause inquired, 'But, I say, won't your employer, the owner of the factory, have anything to say about it? Won't he make it unpleasant for you?'

Solomin looked askance at Nezhdanov.

'Don't worry about me. . . . That's quite a waste of time. As long as the factory goes all right, it's all one to my employer. Neither you nor your dear young lady have any unpleasantness to fear from him. And the workmen will be no danger to you. Only let me know beforehand. About what time am I to expect you?'

Nezhdanov and Marianna looked at one another.

'The day after to-morrow, early in the morning, or the day after that,' Nezhdanov said at last. 'We can't put it off any longer. It's as likely as not they'll turn me out of the house to-morrow.'

'All right . . .' assented Solomin, and he got up from his chair. 'I will look out for you

every morning. And, indeed, I shan't be away from home all the week. Every step shall be taken in due course.'

Marianna drew near him (she was on her way to the door). 'Good-bye, dear, kind Vassily Fedotitch . . . that is your name, isn't it?'

'Yes.'

'Good-bye . . . at least, till we meet, and thanks—thank you!'

'Good-bye. . . . Good night, dear child.'

'And good-bye, Nezhdanov, till to-morrow . . .' she added.

Marianna went out quickly.

Both the young men remained for some time without moving, and both were silent.

'Nezhdanov . . .' Solomin began at last, and he broke off. 'Nezhdanov,' he began again, 'tell me about this girl . . . what you can tell me. What has her life been up till now? . . . Who is she? . . . and how does she come to be here?'

Nezhdanov told Solomin briefly what he knew.

'Nezhdanov,' he began again at last . . . 'you ought to take care of that girl; for . . . if anything . . . were to happen . . . you would be very much to blame. Good-bye.'

He went away, and Nezhdanov stood still

for a while in the middle of the room; then muttering, 'Ah! it's better not to think,' he flung himself face downwards on the bed.

When Marianna got back to her room, she found on the table a small note, which ran as follows: 'I am sorry for you. You are going to your ruin. Think what you are doing. Into what abyss are you flinging yourself with your eyes shut?—for whom, and for what?—V.'

There was a peculiar delicate fresh scent in the room; it was clear that Valentina Mihalovna had only just gone out of it. Marianna took a pen, and, writing underneath, 'Don't pity me. God knows which of us two is most in need of pity. I only know I would not be in your place.—M.,' she left the note on the table. She had no doubt that her answer would fall into Valentina Mihalovna's hands.

The next morning Solomin, after seeing Nezhdanov, and absolutely declining to undertake the management of Sipyagin's factory, set off homewards. He mused all the way home, a thing which very seldom occurred with him; the motion of the carriage usually lulled him into a light sleep. He thought of Marianna and also of Nezhdanov. He fancied that if he had been in love, he—Solomin—he would have had quite a different face, that he

would have talked and looked quite differently 'But,' he reflected, 'since that has never happened to me, I can't tell, of course, what I should look like if it did.' He remembered an Irish girl whom he had once seen in a shop behind the counter; he remembered what wonderful, almost black, hair she had, her blue eyes and thick lashes, and how she had looked sadly and wistfully at him, and how long afterwards he had walked up and down the street before her windows, how excited he had been, and how he had kept asking himself, should he make her acquaintance or not? He was then staying in London. His employer had sent him there with a sum of money to make purchases for him. Solomin had been on the point of stopping on in London, of sending the money back to his employer, so strong was the impression made on him by the lovely Polly. . . . (He had found out her name; one of the other shopgirls had addressed her by it.) He had mastered himself, however, and went back to his employer. Polly had been far more beautiful than Marianna, but this girl had the same sad, wistful look in her eyes . . . and she was a Russian. . . .

'But what am I thinking about?' said Solomin, half aloud, 'bothering my head about other men's sweethearts!' and he gave a shake to the

collar of his coat as though wishing to shake off all unnecessary ideas; and just then he drove up to the factory and caught a glimpse of the figure of the faithful Pavel in the doorway of his little lodge.

XXVI

SOLOMIN'S refusal greatly offended Sipyagin—so much so that he suddenly arrived at the opinion that this home-bred Stevenson was not such a remarkable mechanician after all, and that, though he might very likely not be a complete sham, he certainly gave himself airs like a regular plebeian. 'All these Russians, when they imagine they know a thing, are beyond everything. *Au fond* Kallomyetsev is right.' Under the influence of such irritated and malignant sensations, the statesman—*en herbe*—was even more unsympathetic and distant when he looked at Nezhdanov. He informed Kolya that he need not work with his tutor to-day—that he must form a habit of self-reliance. . . . He did not, however, give the tutor himself his dismissal, as the latter had expected; he continued to ignore him. But Valentina Mihalovna did not ignore Marianna. A terrible scene took place between them.

At about two o'clock they happened somehow to be suddenly left alone together in the drawing-room. Each of them was immediately aware that the moment of the inevitable conflict had come, and so, after a momentary hesitation, they gradually approached each other. Valentina Mihalovna was faintly smiling, Marianna's lips were compressed; they were both pale. As she moved across the room, Valentina Mihalovna looked to right and to left and picked a leaf of geranium . . . Marianna's eyes were fixed directly upon the smiling face approaching her.

Madame Sipyagin was the first to stop, and, drumming with her finger-tips on the back of the chair: 'Marianna Vikentyevna,' she said in a careless voice, 'we have, I think, entered upon a correspondence with one another. . . . Living under one roof as we do, that is rather odd, and you are aware that I am not fond of oddities of any sort.'

'It was not I began that correspondence, Valentina Mihalovna.'

'No. . . . You are right. I am to blame for the oddity this time; but I could find no other means to arouse in you a feeling of . . . how shall I say? . . . a feeling of——'

'Speak out, Valentina Mihalovna; don't mince matters—don't be afraid of offending me.'

'A feeling . . . of propriety.

Valentina Mihalovna paused; nothing but the light tap of her fingers on the chair-back could be heard in the room.

'How do you consider I have been careless of propriety?' asked Marianna.

Valentina Mihalovna shrugged her shoulders.

'*Ma chère, vous n'êtes plus un enfant*, and you understand me perfectly. Can you suppose your behaviour could remain a secret to me, to Anna Zaharovna, to the whole household, in fact? Besides, you have not taken much pains to keep it a secret. You have simply acted in bravado. Boris Andreitch alone has, perhaps, not observed it. . . . He is absorbed in other matters of more interest and importance. But, except for him, your conduct is known to all —all!'

Marianna grew steadily paler and paler.

'I would ask you, Valentina Mihalovna, to be more definite in your expressions. With what precisely are you displeased?'

'*L'insolente!*' thought Madame Sipyagin. She still restrained herself, however.

'You wish to know what I am displeased about, Marianna? Certainly. I am displeased at your prolonged interviews with a young man who by birth, by education, and by social position is far beneath you. I am displeased

. . . no! that word is not strong enough—I am revolted by your late . . . your midnight visits to that young man's room. And that under my roof! Do you suppose that that is quite as it should be, and that I am to be silent, and, as it were, screen your flightiness? As a woman of irreproachable virtue . . . *Oui, mademoiselle, je l'ai été, je le suis, et le serai toujours*—I cannot help feeling indignant.'

Valentina Mihalovna flung herself into an arm-chair as though crushed by the weight of her indignation.

Marianna smiled for the first time.

'I do not doubt your virtue, past, present, and future,' she began, 'and I say so quite sincerely; but your indignation is needless; I have brought no disgrace on your roof. The young man to whom you allude . . . yes, I certainly . . . have come to love him. . . .'

'You love Monsieur Nezhdanov?'

Yes, I love him.'

Valentina Mihalovna sat up in her chair.

'Good heavens, Marianna! why, he's a student, of no birth, no family—why, he's younger than you are!' (There was a certain spiteful pleasure in the utterance of these words.) 'What can come of it? and what can you, with your intellect, find in him? He's simply a shallow boy.'

'That was not always your opinion of him, Valentina Mihalovna.'

'Oh, mercy on us, my dear, let me alone. . . . *Pas tant d'esprit que ça, je vous prie.* It is you we are discussing—you and your future. Fancy! what sort of a match is it for you?'

'I must confess, Valentina Mihalovna, I had not thought of it in that light.'

'Eh? What? What am I to understand by that? You have followed the dictates of your heart, we are to suppose. . . . But all that is bound to end in marriage, isn't it?'

'I don't know. . . . I have not thought about that.'

'You have not thought about that? Why, you must be mad!'

Marianna turned slightly away.

'Let us make an end of this conversation, Valentina Mihalovna. It can lead to nothing. We shall never understand one another.'

Valentina Mihalovna got up impulsively.

'I cannot, I ought not to make an end of this conversation! It is too important. . . . I have to answer for you to . . .' Valentina Mihalovna had meant to say 'to God,' but she faltered, and said, 'to the whole world. I cannot be silent when I hear such senselessness! And why cannot I understand you? The insufferable conceit of these young people! No!

. . . I understand you very well; I can see that you are infected with these new ideas which will inevitably lead you to your ruin! but then it will be too late.'

'Perhaps; but you may rest assured of one thing: even in my ruin, I shall never hold out a finger to you for aid.'

'Conceit again, this awful conceit! Come, listen to me, Marianna, listen to me,' she went on, suddenly changing her tone. . . . She was on the point of drawing Marianna to her, but Marianna stepped back a pace. '*Écoutez-moi, je vous en conjure.* After all, you know I am not so old and not so stupid that it's impossible for us to understand each other. *Je ne suis pas une encroutée.* I was even regarded as a republican in my young days . . . just as you are. Listen to me. I will not affect what I don't feel. I have never felt a mother's tenderness for you, and it's not in your character to complain of that . . . but I have recognised and I do recognise that I have duties in regard to you, and I have always tried to perform them. Perhaps the match I dreamed of for you, and for which Boris Andreitch and I, both of us, would have been ready to make any sacrifices . . . that suitor did not fully answer to your ideas . . . but from the bottom of my heart——'

Marianna looked at Valentina Mihalovna

at the wonderful eyes, at the pink, faintly touched-up lips, at the white hands, with the slightly parted fingers adorned with rings, which the elegant lady was pressing so expressively to the bodice of her silk gown,—and suddenly she cut her short.

'A match, do you say, Valentina Mihalovna? Do you mean by a "match" that heartless, vulgar friend of yours, Mr. Kallomyetsev?'

Valentina Mihalovna took her fingers from her bodice.

'Yes, Marianna Vikentyevna, I mean Mr. Kallomyetsev—that cultivated, excellent young man, who will certainly make a wife happy, and whom no one but a madwoman could refuse—no one but a madwoman!'

'What's to be done, *ma tante*? It would seem I am one.'

'But what fault—what serious fault—do you find with him?'

'Oh, none at all. I despise him . . . that's all.'

Valentina Mihalovna shook her head from side to side impatiently, and again sank into an arm-chair.

'Let him be. *Retournons à nos moutons.* And so you love Mr. Nezhdanov?'

'Yes.'

'And you intend to continue . . . your interviews with him?'

'Yes, I intend to.'

'Well . . . and if I forbid you to?'

'I sha'n't listen to you.'

Valentina Mihalovna bounded up in her chair.

'Oh, you won't listen to me! Oh, indeed! And that's said to me by the girl I have loaded with benefits, whom I have cared for in my own house—that is what's said to me . . . is said to me . . .'

'By the daughter of a disgraced father,' Marianna put in gloomily. 'Go on; don't mince matters.'

'*Ce n'est pas moi qui vous le fais dire, mademoiselle;* but, any way, there's nothing to be proud of *in that.* A girl who lives at my expense——'

'Don't taunt me with that, Valentina Mihalovna! It would cost you more to keep a French governess for Kolya. . . . You know I give him French lessons.'

Valentina Mihalovna raised a hand holding a cambric handkerchief scented with ylang-ylang and embroidered with a huge white monogram in one corner, and tried to make some retort, but Marianna went on vehemently:

'You would have every right a thousand times over, every right to speak if, instead of all you have just been reckoning up, instead of all these

pretended benefits and sacrifices, you were in a position to say, "the girl I have loved." . . . But you are too honest to tell such a lie as that.' Marianna was shaking as if she were in a fever. 'You have always hated me. At this very moment, at the bottom of your heart, as you said just now, you are glad—yes, glad—that I am justifying your constant predictions, that I am covering myself with scandal, with disgrace; all that you mind is that part of the disgrace may fall on your aristocratic, *virtuous* household.'

'You are insulting me,' faltered Valentina Mihalovna. 'Kindly leave the room.'

But Marianna could not control herself.

'Your household, you say, all your household and Anna Zaharovna and all know of my conduct! and they are all horrified and indignant. . . . But do you suppose I ask anything of you, or them, or any of these people? Do you suppose I prize their good opinion? Do you think the living at your expense, as you call it, has been sweet? I would prefer any poverty to this luxury. Don't you see that between your household and me there's a perfect gulf, a gulf that nothing can conceal? Can you —you're a clever woman, too—fail to realise that? And if you feel hatred for me, can't you understand the feeling I must have for

you, which I don't particularise, simply because it is too obvious?'

'*Sortez, sortez, vous dis-je!* . . .' repeated Valentina Mihalovna, and she stamped with her pretty, slender little foot.

Marianna took a step in the direction of the door.

'I will rid you of my presence directly; but do you know what, Valentina Mihalovna? They say that even in Rachel's mouth in Racine's *Bajazet* that '*Sortez!*' was not effective, and you are far behind her! And something more, what was it you said? "*Je suis une honnête femme, je l'ai été, et le serai toujours.*" Only fancy, I am convinced I'm a great deal honester than you! Good-bye!'

Marianna went out hurriedly, while Valentina Mihalovna leaped up from her chair; she wanted to shriek, she wanted to cry. . . . But what to shriek she did not know; and tears did not come at her bidding.

She had to be content with fanning herself with her handkerchief; but the scent with which it was saturated affected her nerves still more. She felt unhappy, insulted. She was conscious of a grain of truth in what she had just heard. But how could any one judge her so unjustly? 'Can I be such a spiteful creature?' she thought, and she looked at herself

in the looking-glass, which happened to be straight before her between two windows. The looking-glass reflected a charming face, somewhat discomposed, with patches of red coming out upon it, but still a fascinating face, exquisite, soft, velvety eyes. . . . 'I? I spiteful?' she thought again. . . . 'With eyes like those?'

But at that instant her husband came in, and she hid her face in her handkerchief again.

'What is wrong with you?' he inquired anxiously. 'What is it, Valya?' (He had invented that pet name, though he never allowed himself to use it except in absolute *tête-à-tête*, by preference in the country.)

At first she was reticent, declared there was nothing wrong, but ended by turning round in her chair, in a very graceful and touching way, and flinging her arms round his shoulders (he was standing bending over her), hiding her face in the open front of his waistcoat, and telling him everything; without any hypocrisy or hidden motive, she tried, if not to excuse, at least to some extent to justify Marianna; she threw all the blame on her youth, her passionate temperament, and the defects of her early education; she also, to some extent, and also with no double motive, blamed herself. 'With my daughter, this would never have happened!

I should have looked after her very differently!' Sipyagin heard her out with indulgence, sympathy, and severity; he kept his stooping posture since she did not take her arms from his shoulders, and did not remove her head; he called her an angel, kissed her on the forehead, announced that he saw now the course of action dictated to him by his position, the position of the head of the house, and withdrew with the gait of a man of humane but energetic character, who has to make up his mind to perform an unpleasant but inevitable duty.

About eight o'clock, after dinner, Nezhdanov was sitting in his room writing to his friend Silin: 'Dear Vladimir, I am writing to you at the moment of a vital change in my existence. I have been dismissed from this house. I am going away. But that would be nothing. I am going from here not alone. The girl I have written to you about accompanies me. We are bound together by the similarity of our fate in life, the identity of our views and efforts, by our mutual feeling too. We love each other; at least, I believe I am not capable of feeling the passion of love in any other form than that in which it presents itself to me now. But I should be lying to you if I said I had no secret feeling of terror, even a sort of strange sinking at heart. The future is

all dark, and we are pushing forward together into this darkness. I need not explain to you what it is we are going into, and what work we have chosen. Marianna and I are not in search of happiness ; we don't want to enjoy ourselves, but to struggle on together, side by side, supporting each other. Our aim is clear to us ; but what ways will lead up to it, we do not know. Shall we find, if not sympathy and help, at least freedom to work? Marianna is a splendid, honest girl ; if it is decreed that we perish, I shall not reproach myself for having led her to ruin, for there is no other life possible to her now. But Vladimir, Vladimir! my heart is heavy. I am tortured by doubt, not of my feeling for her, of course, but . . . I don't know. Anyhow, it's too late to turn back. Stretch out a hand to us both from afar, and wish us patience, power of self-sacrifice, and love . . . more love. And ye, unknown of us, but loved by us with all our being, every drop of our heart's blood, Russian people, receive us not too coldly, and teach us what we are to expect from you! Farewell, Vladimir, farewell!'

After writing these few lines, Nezhdanov set off to the village. The next night, the dawn was hardly breaking in the sky when he stood on the outskirts of the birch wood at no great

distance from Sipyagin's garden. A little behind him, a little peasant's cart, harnessed to a pair of unbridled horses, could be seen behind the tangled green of a broad hazel-bush; in the cart, under the seat of plaited cord, a little grey-headed old peasant lay asleep on a bundle of hay, with a patched overcoat over his head, Nezhdanov kept incessantly looking towards the road, towards the clump of willows at the garden's edge; the grey stillness of night still hung over everything, the tiny stars strove feebly to outshine each other, lost in the waste depths of the sky. Along the rounded lower edges of the stretching clouds ran a pale flush from the east; thence too came the first chill breath of early morning. Suddenly Nezhdanov started and was all alert; somewhere near at hand there was first the shrill creak, then the thump of a gate; a little feminine figure wrapped in a shawl, with a bundle in its bare hand, stepped with a deliberate movement out of the still shadows of the willows on to the soft dust of the road, and crossing it in a slanting direction, apparently on tiptoe, turned towards the copse. Nezhdanov rushed up to it.

'Marianna?' he whispered.

'It's I!' came a soft reply from under the overhanging shawl.

'This way, follow me,' responded Nezhdanov,

clutching her awkwardly by the bare hand that held the bundle.

She shrank up as if she felt chilled by the frost. He led her to the cart, and waked up the peasant. The latter jumped up quickly, clambered promptly on to the driver's seat, slipped his arms into the great-coat, and caught up the cords that served for reins. The horses shook themselves; he cautiously encouraged them in a voice still hoarse from his heavy sleep. Nezhdanov made Marianna sit down on the cord seat of the cart, first spreading his cloak on it; he wrapped her feet in a rug—the hay at the bottom of the cart was damp—placed himself beside her, and, bending over to the peasant, said softly, 'Drive on you know where.' The peasant gave a tug to the reins, the horses came out of the thicket, snorting and shaking themselves; and, rattling and jolting on its narrow old wheels, the cart rolled along the road. Nezhdanov put one arm round Marianna's waist to support her; she lifted the shawl a little with her cold fingers, and turning and facing him with a smile, she said, 'How deliciously fresh it is, Alyosha!'

'Yes,' answered the peasant, 'there'll be a heavy dew!'

There was already such a heavy dew that the axles of the cart-wheels, as they caught in the

tops of the tall weeds along the roadside, shook off whole showers of delicate drops of water, and the green of the grass looked bluish-grey.

Again Marianna shivered from the cold.

'How fresh, how fresh!' she repeated in a light-hearted voice. 'And freedom, Alyosha, freedom!'

XXVII

SOLOMIN ran out to the gates of the factory as soon as they flew to tell him that a gentleman and a lady had arrived in a little cart, and were asking for him. Without saying good-morning to his visitors, simply nodding his head several times to them, he at once told the peasant to drive into the yard, and, directing him straight up to his little lodge, he helped Marianna out of the cart. Nezhdanov leaped out after her. Solomin led them both along a little, long, dark passage, and up a narrow winding little staircase, in the back part of the lodge, to the second story. There he opened a low door, and they all three went into a small, fairly clean room with two windows.

'Welcome!' said Solomin, with his never-failing smile, which seemed broader and brighter than ever to-day.

'Here are your quarters, this room, and see here, another next to it. Not much to look at, but that's no matter; one can live in them,

and there'll be no one here to spy on you. Here under the window you have what the landlord calls a flower-garden, but I should call it a kitchen-garden; it lies right up against the wall, and hedges to right and left. A quiet little nook it is! Well, welcome a second time, dear young lady, and you too, Nezhdanov, welcome!'

He shook hands with them both. They stood motionless, not taking off their wraps, and with silent, half-bewildered, half-delighted emotion they looked straight before them.

'Well, what now?' Solomin began again. 'Take off your things! What baggage have you got?'

Marianna showed the bundle which she was still holding in her hand.

'This is all I have.'

'And my trunk and bag are still in the cart. But I'll go and get them directly.'

'Stand still, stand still.' Solomin opened the door. 'Pavel!' he shouted into the darkness of the staircase, 'run out, mate. There are some things in the cart . . . bring them up.'

'Directly,' they heard the voice of the ubiquitous Pavel.

Solomin turned to Marianna, who had flung off her shawl and was beginning to unbutton her cloak.

'And did everything go off successfully?' he inquired.

'Everything . . . no one saw us. I left a letter for Mr. Sipyagin. I didn't take any dresses or clothes with me, Vassily Fedotitch, because as you are going to send us . . .' (Marianna for some reason could not make up her mind to add "to the people"), 'well, any way, they'd have been of no use. But I have money to buy what is necessary.'

'We'll arrange all that later . . . and here,' said Solomin, pointing to Pavel, who came in with Nezhdanov's things, 'I commend to you my best friend here; you can rely on him fully . . . as you would on me. Did you speak to Tatyana about the samovar?' he added in an undertone.

'It'll be here directly,' answered Pavel; 'and the cream and everything.'

'Tatyana is his wife,' Solomin went on, 'and she is just as trustworthy as he is. Until you . . . well . . . are a bit used to it, she will wait on you, my dear young lady.'

Marianna flung her cloak on a little leather sofa that stood in the corner. 'Call me Marianna, Vassily Fedotitch—I don't want to be a young lady. And I don't want any one to wait on me. . . . I didn't come here to have servants. Don't look at my dress; I had—

over there—nothing else. All that must be changed.'

The dress, of fine cinnamon-coloured cloth, was very simple; but cut by a Petersburg dressmaker, it fell in elegant folds about Marianna's waist and shoulders, and had altogether a fashionable air.

'Well, not a servant, but a help, perhaps, in the American fashion. And you must have tea, any way. It's early days yet, and you must both be tired. I am going off now to see after things in the factory; we shall meet again later. Tell Pavel or Tatyana whatever you want.'

Marianna held out both hands quickly to him.

'How can we thank you, Vassily Fedotitch?' She looked at him quite moved.

Solomin softly stroked one of her hands. 'I should say, it's not worth thanking for . . . but that wouldn't be true. I'd better say that your thanks give me immense pleasure. So we're quits. Good-bye for the present! Pavel, come along.'

Marianna and Nezhdanov were left alone.

She rushed up to him, and, looking at him with just the same expression as she had looked at Solomin, only with even more delight, more emotion and gladness, 'Oh,

my dear!' she said . . . 'We are beginning a new life. . . . At last! at last! You wouldn't believe how charming and delightful this poor little lodging where we are only to spend a few days seems to me compared with that loathsome mansion! Tell me are you glad, dear?'

Nezhdanov took her hands and pressed them to his heart.

'I am happy, Marianna, that I am beginning this new life with you! You will be my guiding star, dear, my support, my strength. . . .'

'Dearest Alyosha! But stay. I want to wash a little and make myself tidy. I'll go to my own room . . . and you, stay here. One minute. . . .'

Marianna went off into the other room, shut herself in, and a minute later half-opened the door, put her head in, and said, 'And oh! isn't Solomin nice!' Then she shut the door again, and the key clicked in the lock.

Nezhdanov went up to the window, and looked out into the little garden . . . one old, very old apple-tree for some reason riveted his attention especially. He shook himself, stretched, began opening his trunk, and took nothing out of it; he fell to musing. . . .

In a quarter of an hour Marianna returned with a beaming, freshly washed face, all gaiety

and alertness; and a few instants later Pavel's wife, Tatyana, appeared with the samovar, the tea-tray, rolls and cream.

In striking contrast to her gypsylike husband, she was a typical Russian woman, stout with a flaxen head, with a big knob of hair tightly twisted round a horn comb, and no cap, with thick but pleasant features, and very good-natured grey eyes. She was dressed in a tidy though faded chintz gown; her hands were clean and well-shaped, though large; she bowed tranquilly, and with a firm, precise intonation, without any sort of affectation, she articulated, 'A very good health to you,' and set to work to lay the samovar and the tea things.

Marianna went up to her.

'Let me help you, Tatyana. Only give me a napkin.'

'No need, miss, we're used to it. Vassily Fedotitch has talked to me. If anything's wanted, kindly ask for it; we will do what we can with all the pleasure in life.'

'Tatyana, please don't call me miss. . . . I'm dressed like a lady, but still I'm . . . I'm quite . . .'

The steady gaze of Tatyana's keen eyes disconcerted Marianna; she broke off.

'And what then is it you will be?' Tatyana asked in her composed voice.

'I am certainly, if you like . . . I am a lady by birth; only I want to get rid of all that, and to become like all . . . like all simple women.'

'Ah, so that's it! Well, now I understand. You're one of them, I suppose, that want to be simplified. There are a good few of them about nowadays.'

'What did you say, Tatyana? To be simplified?'

'Yes . . . that's the word that's come up among us now. To be on a level with simple folks, it means—simplification. To be sure, it is a good work—to teach the peasants good sense. Only it's a difficult job! Oy, oy di-ifficult! God give you good speed!'

'Simplification!' repeated Marianna. 'Do you hear, Alyosha? you and I are simplified creatures now!'

Nezhdanov laughed, and even repeated:

'Simplified creatures!'

'And what will he be to you—your good man or your brother?' asked Tatyana, carefully washing the cups with her large deft hands, as she looked with a kindly smile from Nezhdanov to Marianna.

'No, answered Marianna, 'he's not my husband and not my brother.'

Tatyana raised her head.

'Then I suppose you are living in free grace. Nowadays that too is pretty often to be met with. It used to be more the way among the dissenters, but nowadays it's found among other folks too. Where there's God's blessing, one may live in peace! And there's no need of the priest for that. In our factory there are some live like that too. Not the worst chaps either.'

'What nice things you say, Tatyana! . . . "In free grace." . . . I like that very much. I'll tell you what I want to ask of you, Tatyana. I want to make myself, or to buy, a dress like yours, or rather commoner perhaps. And shoes and stockings and a kerchief, everything just as you have. I have money enough to get them.'

'To be sure, miss, we can manage all that. . . . There, I won't, don't be cross. I won't call you miss. Only what am I to call you?'

'Marianna.'

'And what are you named from your father?'

'But why do you want my father's name? Call me simply Marianna. The same as I call you Tatyana.'

'That's the same, and not the same. You'd better tell me.'

'Very well, then. My father's name was Vikent; and what was your father's?'

'Mine was Osip.'

'Well, then, I shall call you Tatyana Osipovna.'

'And I'll call you Marianna Vikentyevna. That will be capital!'

'Won't you drink a cup of tea with us, Tatyana Osipovna?'

'At this first acquaintance I might, Marianna Vikentyevna. I'll treat myself to a small cup, though Yegoritch will scold.'

'Who's Yegoritch?'

'Pavel, my husband.'

'Sit down, Tatyana Osipovna.'

'Indeed and I will, Marianna Vikentyevna.'

Tatyana seated herself on a chair and began to sip her tea through a piece of sugar. She continually turned the lump of sugar round in her fingers, screwing up her eye on the side on which she was nibbling the sugar. Marianna got into conversation with her. Tatyana answered without obsequiousness, and asked her questions and told her various things of her own accord. Solomin she almost worshipped, but her husband she put only second to Vassily Fedotitch. She was sick of factory life, though.

'You've neither the town here nor the country . . . if it weren't for Vassily Fedotitch I wouldn't stay another hour.'

Marianna listened attentively to her talk Nezhdanov, sitting a little on one side, watched his girl friend, and was not surprised at her interest; for Marianna, it was all a novelty, but it seemed to him that he had seen hundreds of similar Tatyanas, and had talked to them hundreds of times.

'Do you know, Tatyana Osipovna,' said Marianna at last, 'you think we want to teach the people; no, we want to serve them.'

'How serve them? Teach them; that 's the best service you can do them. Take me, for example. When I was married to Yegoritch, neither read nor write could I; but now I 've learned, thanks to Vassily Fedotitch. He didn't teach me himself, but he paid an old man to. And he taught me. You see I 'm young still, for all I 'm a woman grown.'

Marianna was silent for a little.

'I should like, Tatyana Osipovna,' she began again, 'to learn some trade . . . we must have a talk about that. I sew very badly; if I were to learn to cook, I might become a cook.'

Tatyana pondered.

'Why be a cook? Cooks are in rich men's houses, or merchants'; poor people do their own cooking. And to cook for a union, for workmen. Well, that 's quite the last thing!'

'But I might live in a rich man's house

though, and make friends with poor people. Or how am I to get to know them? I sha'n't always have such luck as with you.'

Tatyana turned her empty cup upside down in the saucer.

'It's a difficult business,' she observed at last with a sigh, 'it can't be settled off-hand. I'll show you all I know, but I'm not clever at much. We must talk it over with Yegoritch. He's such a man! He reads books of all sorts, and he can see through anything in the twinkling of an eye.' Here she glanced at Marianna, who was rolling up a cigarette. . . .

'And there's something I would say to you, Marianna Vikentyevna, if you'll excuse me; but if you really want to be simplified, you'll have to give that up.' She pointed to the cigarette. 'For in such callings as a cook's, for instance, that would never pass; and every one would see at once that you're a young lady. Yes.'

Marianna flung the cigarette out of the window.

'I won't smoke . . . it's easy to get out of the way of it. Women of the people don't smoke, so I ought not to smoke.'

'That's a true word you've said, Marianna Vikentyevna. The male sex treat themselves to it even among us; but the female—no. . . .

Ah! and here's Vassily Fedotitch himself coming up. That's his step. You ask him; he'll settle everything for you in the best way!'

She was right; Solomin's voice was heard at the door.

'May I come in?'

'Come in, come in,' called Marianna.

'That's an English habit of mine,' said Solomin as he came in. 'Well, how do you feel? You aren't dull yet? I see you're having tea here with Tatyana. You listen to her; she's a sensible person. . . . But my employer has turned up to see me to-day . . . when he's not wanted at all! And he'll stay to dinner. There's no help for it! He's the master.'

'What sort of man is he?' asked Nezhdanov, coming out of his corner.

'Oh, he's all right. . . . He has his eyes about him. One of the newer generation. Very affable, and wears cuffs, but pries into everything not a bit less than the old sort. He'd skin a flint with his own hands and say, "Turn a bit to this side, if you'll be so good; there's still a living spot here . . . I must give it a scouring!" Well, with me he's as soft as silk; I'm necessary to him! Only I've come to tell you that I'm not likely to

manage to see you to-day. They will bring you your dinner. And don't show yourselves in the yard. What do you think, Marianna—will the Sipyagins search for you? will they make a hunt?'

'I think they won't,' answered Marianna.

'But I am sure they will,' said Nezhdanov.

'Well, any way,' pursued Solomin, 'you must be careful at first. Later on you can do as you like.'

'Yes; only there's one thing,' observed Nezhdanov: 'Markelov must know of my whereabouts; he must be told.'

'Why?'

'It can't be helped; for the cause. He has always to know where I am. It's a promise. But he won't blab!'

'Very well. We'll send Pavel.'

'And will there be a dress ready for me?' asked Nezhdanov.

'Your get-up, you mean? to be sure . . . to be sure. It's quite a masquerade. Not an expensive one, thank goodness. Good-bye; you must have a rest. Tatyana, come along.'

Marianna and Nezhdanov were again left alone.

XXVIII

FIRST they clasped each other's hands again; then Marianna cried, 'Come, I'll help you arrange your room,' and she began unpacking his things from the trunk and the bag. Nezhdanov would have helped her, but she declared she was going to do it all alone.

'Because I must get used to making myself useful.' And she did in fact hang up his coat on nails which she found in the table drawer, and knocked into the wall, unaided, with the back of a brush for want of a hammer; the linen she laid in a little old chest which stood between the windows.

'What's this?' she asked suddenly; 'a revolver? Is it loaded? What do you want with it?'

'It's not loaded ... but give it here, though. You ask what I want with it? How is one to get on without a revolver in our calling?'

She laughed and went on with her task, shaking out each thing separately and beating

it with her hand; she even set two pairs of boots under the sofa; while the few books, a bundle of papers, and the little manuscript book of verses she arranged in triumph on a three-legged corner-table, saying it was to be the writing- and work-table, while the other round table she called the dinner- and tea-table. Then taking the book of verses in both hands, she raised it to a level with her face, and looking over its edge at Nezhdanov, she said with a smile, 'We'll read all this through together some time when we're not busy, won't we?—eh?'

'Give me that book! I'll burn it!' cried Nezhdanov. 'It's worth nothing better.'

'Why did you bring it with you, if so? No, no, I'm not going to give it you to be burnt. Though they say authors always make that threat, but never do burn their things. But any way, I'd better carry it off!'

Nezhdanov tried to protest, but Marianna ran into the next room with the manuscript book and returned without it.

She sat down close to Nezhdanov, and instantly got up again. 'You haven't been . . . in my room yet. Would you like to see it? It's as nice as yours. Come, I'll show you.'

Nezhdanov got up too and followed Marianna. *Her* room, as she called it, was a little smaller

than *his* room; but the furniture in it seemed rather newer and cleaner; in the window stood a glass vase of flowers, and in the corner a little iron bedstead.

'See how sweet of Solomin!' cried Marianna; 'only one mustn't let oneself be too much spoilt; we shan't often meet with such quarters. And what I think is, what would be nice would be to arrange things so that whatever place we have to go to we could go both together, without parting. It will be difficult,' she added after a short pause; 'well, we'll think of it. Any way, I suppose you won't go back to Petersburg?'

'What should I do in Petersburg? Go to the university and give lessons? That would be of no use now.'

'We'll see what Solomin says,' observed Marianna; 'he'll best decide how and what to do.'

They went back to the first room and again sat down beside each other. They spoke with praise of Solomin, Tatyana, and Pavel; they mentioned Sipyagin, and said how their old life seemed suddenly so far away from them, it seemed lost in a cloud; then they pressed each other's hands again, and exchanged glances of delight; then they talked of what sort of people they ought to try to do propaganda among, and how they must behave not to be suspected.

Nezhdanov maintained that the less they thought about that, the more simply they behaved, the better.

'Of course!' cried Marianna. 'Why, we want to be simplified, as Tatyana says.'

'I didn't mean in that sense,' Nezhdanov was beginning. 'I meant to say that we ought not to be constrained——'

Suddenly Marianna laughed.

'I remembered, Alyosha, how I called us both "simplified creatures"!'

Nezhdanov smiled too, repeated 'simplified,' and then sank into thought.

Marianna, too, was thoughtful.

'Alyosha!' she said.

'What?'

'I think we both feel a little awkward. Young people, *des nouveaux mariés*,' she explained, 'the first day of their honeymoon must feel something of the sort. They are happy . . . they are very content, and a little awkward.'

Nezhdanov smiled—a forced smile.

'You know very well, Marianna, that we are not a young couple in that sense.'

Marianna got up and stood directly facing Nezhdanov.

'That depends on you.'

'How?'

'Alyosha, you know that when you tell me as an honest man—and I shall believe you, for you really are an honest man—when you tell me that you love me with that love . . . well, that love that gives one a right to another person's life,—when you tell me that, I am yours.'

Nezhdanov blushed and turned a little away.

'When I tell you that . . .'

'Yes, then! But you see yourself you do not tell me so now. . . . Oh, yes, Alyosha, you certainly are an honest man. There, let us talk of matters of more importance.'

'But you know I love you, Marianna!'

'I don't doubt that . . . and I shall wait. There, I 've not quite put your writing-table to rights yet. Here's something still wrapped up, something stiff.'

Nezhdanov jumped up from his chair

'Let that be, Marianna. . . . Please . . . leave that alone.'

Marianna turned her head over her shoulder to look at him, and raised her eyebrows in amazement.

'Is it a mystery? A secret? You have a secret?'

'Yes . . . yes,' said Nezhdanov, and greatly disconcerted he added, by way of explanation, 'It's . . . a portrait.'

This word fell from him unconsciously. In the paper Marianna held in her hands there was wrapped up, in reality, her portrait, given to Nezhdanov by Markelov.

'A portrait?' she articulated, dwelling on each syllable. . . . 'A woman's?'

She gave him the little parcel, but he took it awkwardly; it almost slipped out of his hands and fell open.

'Why, it's . . . my portrait!' cried Marianna quickly. 'Well, I've a right to take my own portrait.' She took it from Nezhdanov.

'Did you sketch this?'

'No . . . not I.'

'Who, then? Markelov?'

'You've guessed. . . . It was he.'

'How did you come by it?'

'He gave it to me.'

'When?'

Nezhdanov told her how and when it had been given. Whilst he was speaking, Marianna glanced first at him and then at the portrait . . . and the same thought flashed through the heads of both: 'If *he* were in this room, he would have the right to ask.' . . . But neither Marianna nor Nezhdanov uttered this thought aloud . . . possibly because each of them was conscious of the thought in the other.

Marianna softly wrapped the portrait in the paper again, and laid it on the table.

'He's a good man!' she murmured. . . . 'Where is he now?'

'Where? . . . At home. I am going to see him to-morrow or next day to get books and pamphlets. He meant to give them to me, but I suppose he forgot it when I was leaving.'

'And do you think, Alyosha, that in giving you the portrait he renounced everything . . . absolutely everything?'

'I thought so.'

'And you hope to find him at home?'

'Of course.'

'Ah!'—Marianna lowered her eyes and dropped her hands. 'And here's Tatyana bringing us our dinner,' she cried suddenly. 'What a splendid woman she is!'

Tatyana appeared with knives and forks, table-napkins, and plates and dishes. While she was laying the table she told them what had been passing in the factory.

'The master came from Moscow by rail, and he set to running from floor to floor like one possessed; to be sure, he knows nothing about things, he only does like that for show, to keep up appearances. But Vassily Fedotitch treats him like a babe in arms. The master thought he'd say something nasty to him, so Vassily Fedot-

itch suppressed him at once: 'I 'll throw it all up directly,' says he, so our gentleman pretty soon changed his tune. Now they 're dining together; and the master brought a companion with him. . . . And he does nought else but admire everything. And a moneyed man he must be, this companion, to judge from the way he holds his tongue and shakes his head. And he 's stout too, very stout! A regular Moscow swell! Ah, it 's a true saying: "It 's downhill to Moscow from all parts of Russia; everything rolls down to her." '

'How you do notice everything!' cried Marianna.

'Yes, I 'm pretty observant,' replied Tatyana. 'Come, your dinner 's ready. And may it do you good. I 'll sit here a little bit, and watch you.'

Marianna and Nezhdanov sat down to dinner; Tatyana leaned against the window-sill and rested her cheek in her hand.

'I watch you,' she repeated . . . 'and what poor young tender things you both are! . . . It 's so pleasant to see you that it quite makes my heart ache! Ah, my dears! you 're taking up a burden beyond your strength! It 's such as you that the inspectors of the Tsar are ever eager to clap in custody!'

'Nonsense, my good soul, don't frighten us,'

observed Nezhdanov. 'You know the saying: "If you choose to be a mushroom, you must go in the basket with the rest."'

'I know . . . I know; but the baskets nowadays are so narrow and hard to creep out of!'

'Have you any children?' Marianna asked, to change the conversation.

'Yes; a son. He begins to go to school. I had a little girl too; but she 's no more, poor darling! She met with an accident; fell under a wheel. And if only it had killed her at once! But no, she lingered in suffering a long while. Since then I 've grown tender-hearted; before then I was as hard as a tree!'

'Why, what of your man Pavel Yegoritch? didn't you love him?'

'Eh! that was a different matter; the feeling of a girl. And how about you, now—do you love your man?'

'Yes.'

'Very much?'

'Yes.'

'Yes? . . .' Tatyana looked at Nezhdanov, then at Marianna, and said no more.

It was again Marianna's lot to change the conversation. She told Tatyana she had given up smoking; the latter approved of her resolution. Then Marianna asked her again about

clothes; and reminded her she had promised to show her how to cook. . . .

'Oh, and one thing more: could you get me some stout, coarse yarn? I 'm going to knit myself some stockings . . . plain ones.'

Tatyana answered that everything should be done in due course, and, clearing the table, she went out of the room with her calm, resolute gait.

'Well, what shall we do now?' Marianna said, turning to Nezhdanov; and without letting him answer, 'What do you say? since our real work only begins to-morrow, shall we devote this evening to literature? Let 's read your poems! I shall be a severe critic.'

For a long while Nezhdanov would not consent. . . . He ended, however, by giving in, and began to read out of his manuscript book. Marianna sat close beside him, and watched his face while he was reading. She had spoken truly; she turned out to be a severe critic. Few of the verses pleased her; she preferred the purely lyrical, short ones, that were, as she expressed it, non-didactic. Nezhdanov did not read quite well; he had not the courage to attempt elocution, and at the same time was unwilling to fall into quite a colourless tone; the result was neither one thing nor the other. Marianna suddenly interrupted him with the

question, Did he know a wonderful poem of Dobrolyubov's beginning, 'Let me die—small cause for grief'?[1] and thereupon read it to him —also not very well—in a rather childish manner.

Nezhdanov observed that it was bitter and painful to the last degree, and then added that he, Nezhdanov, could never have written such a poem, because he had no reason to be afraid of tears over his grave . . . there would be none.

'There will be, if I outlive you,' Marianna articulated slowly; and raising her eyes to the

[1] And let me die—small cause for grief;
One thought alone frets my sick mind;
That death may chance to play
An unkind jest with me.

I dread lest over my cold corpse
The scalding tears should flow;
And lest some one with stupid zeal
Lay flowers upon my bier;

Lest flocking round in unfeigned grief,
My friends walk after it to the grave;
Lest as I lie under the earth,
I may become one loved and prized;

Lest all so eagerly desired,
And so in vain by me—in life,
May smile on me consolingly
Above the stone that marks my grave.

DOBR., *Works*, vol. iv. p. 515.

ceiling, after a brief silence, in an undertone as though speaking to herself, she queried, 'How ever did he draw a portrait of me? From memory?'

Nezhdanov turned quickly to her. . . .

'Yes, from memory.'

Marianna was amazed at his answering. It seemed to her that she had merely thought the question.

'It is astonishing . . .' she went on in the same subdued voice; 'why, he has no talent for drawing. What was I going to say?' she resumed aloud; 'oh, about Dobrolyubov's poem. One ought to write poems like Pushkin's, or such as that one of Dobrolyubov's: this is not poetry . . . though it's something as good.'

'And poems like mine,' said Nezhdanov, 'ought not to be written at all? Eh?'

'Poems like yours please your friends not because they are very fine, but because you are a fine person, and they are like you.'

Nezhdanov smiled.

'You have buried them, and me with them!'

Marianna gave him a slap on his hand and told him he was too bad. . . . Soon after she announced that she was tired and was going to bed.

'By the way, do you know,' she added, shak-

ing her short, thick curls, 'I 've got one hundred and thirty-seven roubles; what have you?'

'Ninety-eight.'

'Oh! but we're rich . . . for simplified creatures. Well, good-bye till to-morrow!'

She went out; but a few instants later her door was slightly opened, and through the narrow crack he heard first, 'Good-bye!' then more softly, 'Good-bye!' and the key clicked in the lock.

Nezhdanov sank on to the sofa and covered his eyes with his hand. . . . Then he got up quickly, went up to the door, and knocked.

'What is it?' came from within.

'Not till to-morrow, Marianna . . . but to-morrow!'

'To-morrow,' responded a gentle voice.

XXIX

THE next day early in the morning Nezhdanov again knocked at Marianna's door.

'It's I,' he said in answer to her 'Who's there?' 'Can you come out to me?'

'Wait a minute . . . directly.'

She came out, and uttered a cry of astonishment. For the first minute she did not recognise him. He had on a long full-skirted coat of threadbare, yellowish nankin, with tiny buttons and a high waist; he had combed his hair in the Russian style, with a straight parting in the middle; his neck was wrapped in a blue kerchief; in his hand he held a cap with a broken peak; on his feet were unpolished high boots of calf leather.

'Good gracious!' cried Marianna; 'how . . . horrid you look!' and thereupon she gave him a rapid embrace, and a still more rapid kiss. 'But why are you dressed like that? You look like a poor sort of shopkeeper . . . or a pedlar, or a discharged house-serf. Why that coat with skirts, and not simply a peasant's smock?'

'That 's just it,' began Nezhdanov, who in his get-up did really resemble a pedlar, and he was conscious of this himself, and was full of vexation and embarrassment at heart; he was so much embarrassed that he kept striking himself on the breast with the outspread fingers of both hands, as though he were brushing himself.

'In a smock I should have been recognised at once, so Pavel declared; and this costume . . . in his words . . . looked as though I 'd never had any other dress cut for me in my life! Not very flattering to my vanity, I may remark in parenthesis.'

'Do you really mean to go out at once . . . to begin?' Marianna inquired with keen interest.

'Yes; I shall try, though . . . in reality . . .'

'Happy fellow!' interrupted Marianna.

'This Pavel is really a wonderful man,' Nezhdanov went on; 'he knows everything, directly he sets eyes on you; and then all of a sudden he purses up his face, as though he were outside it all,—and wouldn't meddle in anything! He serves the cause himself—and makes fun of it all the while. He brought me the pamphlets from Markelov; he knows him and speaks of him as Sergei Mihalovitch. But for Solomin he 'd go through fire and water.'

'And so would Tatyana,' observed Marianna. 'Why is it people are so devoted to him?'

Nezhdanov did not answer.

'What sort of pamphlets did Pavel bring you?' asked Marianna.

'Oh! the usual things. "The Tale of Four Brothers," . . . and others too . . . the ordinary well-known things. However, those are best.'

Marianna looked round anxiously.

'But what of Tatyana? She promised to come so early.'

'Here she is,' said Tatyana, coming into the room with a small bundle in her hand. She was standing at the door, and had heard Marianna's exclamation.

'You need not be in a hurry; it 's not such a treat as all that.'

Marianna fairly flew to meet her.

'You have brought it!'

Tatyana patted the bundle.

'Everything 's here . . . fully prepared. . . You 've only got to put the things on . . . and go out in your finery for folks to admire you.'

'Ah, come along, come along, Tatyana Osipovna, dear. . . .'

Marianna drew her into her room.

Left alone, Nezhdanov paced twice up and down with a peculiar stealthy gait. . . . (he imagined for some reason that that was just

how small shopkeepers walked); he sniffed cautiously at his own sleeve, and the lining of his cap—and frowned; he looked at himself in a little looking-glass hanging on the wall near the window, and shook his head; he certainly looked very unattractive. 'All the better, though,' he thought. Then he took up a few pamphlets, stuffed them in his skirt pocket, and murmured a few words to himself in the accent of a small shopkeeper. 'I fancy that's like it,' he thought again; 'but after all, what need of acting? my get-up will answer for me.' And at that point Nezhdanov recollected a German convict, who had had to run away right across Russia, and he spoke Russian badly, too; but thanks to a merchant's cap edged with cat's-skin, which he had bought in a provincial town, he was taken everywhere for a merchant, and had successfully made his way over the frontier.

At that instant Solomin came in.

'Aha! brother Alexey,' he cried; 'you're studying your part! Excuse me, brother; in that disguise one can't address you respectfully.'

'Oh, please do. . . . I'd meant to ask you to call me so.'

'Only it's awfully early yet; but, there, I suppose you want to get used to it. Well,

then, all right. But you'll have to wait a bit; the master's not gone yet. He's asleep.'

'I'll go out later on,' answered Nezhdanov. 'I'm going to walk about the neighbourhood till I get instructions of some sort.'

'That's right! Only I tell you what, brother Alexey . . . I may call you Alexey, then?'

''Lexey, if you like,' said Nezhdanov, smiling.

'No; we mustn't overdo it. Listen! good counsel is better than money, as they say. I see you have pamphlets there; you can give them to whom you please—only not in the factory!'

'Why not?'

'Because, in the first place, it would be risky for you; secondly, I have pledged myself to the owner that there shall be nothing of the sort going on—after all, the factory's his, you know; and thirdly, we have something started there—schools and so on. . . . And—well—you might ruin all that. Act as you please, as best you may—I will not hinder you; but don't touch my factory-hands.'

'Caution never comes amiss . . . hey?' Nezhdanov remarked with a malignant half-smile.

Solomin smiled his own broad smile.

'Just so, brother Alexey; it never comes

amiss. But who is this I see? Where are we?'

These last exclamations referred to Marianna, who appeared in the doorway of her room in a sprigged chintz gown, that had seen many washings, with a yellow 'kerchief on her shoulders and a red one on her head. Tatyana was peeping out from behind her back, in simple and kindly admiration of her. Marianna looked both fresher and younger in her simple costume; it suited her far better than the long full-skirted coat suited Nezhdanov.

'Vassily Fedotitch, please don't laugh,' Marianna entreated, and she flushed the colour of a poppy.

'What a pretty pair!' Tatyana was exclaiming, meanwhile clapping her hands. 'Only you, my dear laddie, don't be angry, you're nice, very nice—but beside my little lass here you cut no figure at all.'

'And, really, she's exquisite,' thought Nezhdanov; 'oh! how I love her!'

'And look-ee,' went on Tatyana, 'she's changed rings with me. She's given me her gold one and taken my silver one.'

'Girls of the people don't wear gold rings,' said Marianna.

Tatyana sighed.

'I'll take care of it for you, dearie, never fear.'

'Well, sit down; sit down, both of you,' began Solomin, who had been all the time watching Marianna, with his head a little bent; 'in old days you remember folks always used to sit down together for a bit when they were setting off on their road. And you've both a long, hard road before you.'

Marianna, still rosy red, sat down; Nezhdanov too sat down; Solomin sat down; and last of all Tatyana too sat down on a thick log of wood standing on end.

Solomin looked at all of them in turn:

> 'Step back a bit
> And look at it,
> How nicely here we all do sit . . .'

he said, slightly screwing up his eyes; and all of a sudden he burst out laughing, but so nicely that, far from feeling offended, they were all delighted.

But Nezhdanov suddenly got up.

'I'm off,' he said, 'this minute; though this is all very delightful—only a trifle like a farce with dressing-up in it. Don't be uneasy,' he turned to Solomin; 'I won't touch your factory-hands. I will do a little talking about the suburbs, and come back, and I'll tell you all my adventures, Marianna, if only there's anything to tell. Give me your hand for good luck!'

'A cup of tea'd be as well first,' observed Tatyana.

'No! tea-drinking indeed! If I want anything I'll go to a tavern or simply a gin-shop.'

Tatyana shook her head.

'Those taverns swarm along our highroads nowadays like fleas in a sheepskin. The villages are all so big—why, Balmasovo . . .'

'Good-bye, till we meet . . . may I leave good luck with you!' Nezhdanov added, correcting himself and entering into his part as a small shopkeeper. But before he had reached the door, Pavel poked his head in from the corridor under his very nose, and handing him a long thin staff, peeled, with a strip of bark running round it like a screw, he said: 'Please take it, Alexey Dmitritch; lean on it as you walk; and the further you hold the stick away from you the better effect it will have.'

Nezhdanov took the staff without speaking and went off; Pavel followed him. Tatyana was about to go away too; Marianna got up and stopped her.

'Wait a little, Tatyana Osipovna; I want you.'

'But I'll be back in a minute with the samovar. Your comrade went off without any tea,

—he was in such a desperate hurry. . . . But why should you deny yourself? Later on things 'll be clearer.'

Tatyana went out; Solomin too rose. Marianna was standing with her back to him, and when she did at last turn round to him—seeing that for a very long time he had not uttered a single word—she caught in his face, in his eyes which were fastened upon her, an expression she had never seen in him before, an expression of inquiry, of anxiety, almost of curiosity. She was disconcerted and blushed again. And Solomin seemed ashamed of what she had caught sight of in his face, and he began talking louder than usual:

'Well, well, Marianna . . . here you've made a beginning.'

'A fine beginning, Vassily Fedotitch! How can one call it a beginning? I feel somehow very stupid all of a sudden. Alexey was right; we are really acting a sort of farce.'

Solomin sat down again on his chair.

'But, Marianna, let me say . . . How did you picture it to yourself—the beginning? It's not a matter of building barricades with a flag over them, and shouting hurrah! for the republic! And that's not a woman's work either. But you now to-day will start training some Lukerya in something good, and it 'll be a hard

task for you, as Lukerya won't be over quick of understanding, and she'll be shy of you, and will fancy too that what you're trying to teach her won't be of the least use to her; and in a fortnight or three weeks you'll be struggling with some other Lukerya, and meanwhile you'll be washing a child or teaching him his A B C, or giving medicine to a sick man . . . that will be your beginning.'

'But the sisters of mercy do all that, you know, Vassily Fedotitch! What need, then . . . of all this?' Marianna pointed to herself and round about her with a vague gesture. 'I dreamt of something else.'

'You wanted to sacrifice yourself?'

Marianna's eyes glistened.

'Yes . . . yes . . . yes!'

'And Nezhdanov?'

Marianna shrugged her shoulders.

'What of Nezhdanov! We will go forward together . . . or I will go alone.'

Solomin looked intently at Marianna.

'Do you know what, Marianna . . . you will excuse the unpleasantness of the expression . . . but to my idea, combing the mangy head of a dirty urchin is a sacrifice, and a great sacrifice, of which not many people are capable.'

'But I would not refuse to do that, Vassily Fedotitch.'

'I know you wouldn't! Yes, you are capable of that. And that's what you will be doing for a time; and afterwards, maybe—something else too.'

'But to do that I must learn from Tatyana!'

'By all means . . . get her to show you. You will scour pots, and pluck chickens. . . . And so, who knows, maybe you will save your country!'

'You are laughing at me, Vassily Fedotitch.'

Solomin shook his head slowly.

'O my sweet Marianna! believe me, I am not laughing at you; and my words are the simple truth. You now, all of you, Russian women, are more capable, and loftier too, than we men.'

Marianna raised her downcast eyes.

'I should like to justify your expectations, Solomin . . . and then—I 'm ready to die!'

Solomin got up.

'No, live . . . live! That's the great thing. By the way, don't you want to find out what is taking place in your home now, as regards your flight? Won't they take steps of some sort? We need only drop a word to Pavel—he 'll reconnoitre in no time.'

Marianna was surprised.

'What an extraordinary man he is!'

'Yes . . . he 's rather a wonderful fellow.

For instance, when you want to celebrate your marriage with Alexey—he 'll arrange that too with Zosim. . . . You remember I told you there was a priest. . . . But I suppose there 's no need of him for a while? No?'

'No.'

'No, then.' Solomin went up to the door that separated the two rooms—Nezhdanov's and Marianna's—and bent down over the lock.

'What are you looking at there?' asked Marianna.

'Does it lock?'

'Yes,' whispered Marianna.

Solomin turned to her. She did not raise her eyes.

'Then, there 's no need to find out what are Sipyagin's intentions?' he observed cheerfully; 'no need, eh?'

Solomin was about to go away.

'Vassily Fedotitch . . .'

'What is it?'

'Tell me, please, why is it you, who are always so silent, are so talkative with me? You don't know how much it pleases me.'

'Why is it?'—Solomin took both her little soft hands in his big rough ones—'Why?—Well, it must be because I like you so much. Good-bye.'

He went out. . . . Marianna stood a little,

looked after him, thought a little, and went off to Tatyana, who had not yet brought in the samovar, and with whom she did—it is true—drink tea, but she also scoured pots, and plucked chickens, and even combed out the tangled mane of a small boy.

About dinner-time she returned to her little apartments. . . . She had not long to wait for Nezhdanov.

He returned, weary and covered with dust, and almost fell on to the sofa. She at once sat down beside him. 'Well? well? Tell me!'

'You remember those two lines,' he answered in a weak voice:

> '"It would all have been so comic
> If it had not been so sad"?

Do you remember?'

'Of course I do.'

'Well, those lines apply precisely to my first expedition. But no! There was positively more of the comic in it. In the first place, I 'm convinced that nothing 's easier than to play a part; no one dreamt of suspecting me. But there was one thing I had not thought of—one wants to make up some sort of story beforehand . . . they keep asking one—where you 're from, and what you 're doing—and you have nothing ready. However, even that 's

hardly necessary. One's only to propose a dram of vodka at the gin-shop, and lie away as one pleases.'

'And you . . . did tell lies?' asked Marianna.

'I lied . . . the best I could. The second point is: all, absolutely all the people I talked to are discontented; and no one even cares to know how to remedy this discontent! But at propaganda I seem to be a very poor hand; two pamphlets I simply left secretly in a room —one I thrust into a cart. . . . What 'll come of them the Lord only knows! I offered pamphlets to four men. One asked was it a religious book, and did not take it; another said he could not read, and took it for his children as there was a woodcut on the cover: a third began by agreeing with me. "To be sure, to be sure . . ." then all of a sudden fell to swearing at me in the most unexpected way, and he too did not take one; the fourth at last took one, and thanked me very much for it, but I fancy he couldn't make head or tail of what I said to him. Besides that, a dog bit my leg; a peasant woman brandished a fire-shovel at me from the door of her hut, shouting, "Ugh! you beast! You Moscow loafers! Will nothing drown you?" And a soldier on furlough, too, kept shouting after me, "Wait a minute, we 'll

put a bullet through you, my friend"; and he 'd got drunk on my money!'

'Anything more?'

'Anything more? I 've rubbed a blister on my heel; one of my boots is awfully big. And now I 'm hungry, and my head 's splitting from the vodka.'

'Have you drunk much, then?'

'No, not much—only to set the example; but I 've been in five ginshops. But I can't stand that filth—vodka—a bit. And how our peasant can drink it passes my understanding! If one must drink vodka to be simplified, I 'd rather be excused.'

'And so no one suspected you?'

'No one. An innkeeper, a stout, pale man with whitish eyes, was the only person who looked at me suspiciously. I heard him tell his wife to "keep an eye on that red-haired chap . . . with the squint." (I never knew till then that I squinted.) "He 's a sharper. Do you see how ponderously he drinks?" What ponderously means in that context I didn't understand; but it could hardly be a compliment. Something after the style of Gogol's "movy-ton" in the *Revising Inspector*; do you remember? Perhaps because I tried to pour my vodka under the table on the sly. Ugh! it 's hard, it 's hard for an æsthetic

creature to be brought into contact with real life!'

'Better luck next time,' Marianna consoled Nezhdanov. 'But I'm glad that you look at your first attempt from a humorous point of view. . . . You weren't bored really?'

'No, I wasn't bored; in fact, I was amused. But I know for a certainty I shall begin to think over it now, and I shall feel so sick and so sad.'

'No, no! I won't let you think. I'm going to tell you what I've been doing. Dinner'll be brought us in directly; by the way, I must tell you I've scoured out most thoroughly the pot Tatyana's cooked the soup in. . . . And I shall tell you . . . everything over every spoonful.'

And so she did. Nezhdanov listened to her chat, and looked and looked at her . . . so that several times she stopped to let him tell her why he was looking at her like that. . . . But he was silent.

After dinner she offered to read aloud to him some of Spielhagen. But before she had finished the first page, he got up impulsively, and, going up to her, fell at her feet. She stood up, he flung both his arms round her knees, and began to utter passionate words—disconnected and despairing words! 'He would

like to die, he knew he would soon die. . . .' She did not stir, did not resist; she calmly submitted to his abrupt embrace, calmly, even caressingly, looked down at him. She laid both hands on his head, that was shaking convulsively in the folds of her dress. But her very calmness had a more powerful effect on him than if she had repulsed him. He got up, murmured: 'Forgive me, Marianna, for what has passed to-day and yesterday; tell me again that you are ready to wait till I am worthy of your love, and forgive me.'

'I have given you my word . . . and I can't change.'

'Thank you; good-bye.'

Nezhdanov went out; Marianna locked herself in her room.

XXX

A FORTNIGHT later, in the same place, this was what Nezhdanov was writing to his friend Silin, as he bent over his little three-legged table, on which a tallow candle gave a dim and niggardly light. (It was long after midnight. On the sofa and on the floor lay mud-stained garments, hurriedly flung off; a fine, incessant rain was pattering on the window-panes, and a strong, warm wind breathed in great sighs about the roof.)

'DEAR VLADIMIR,—I am writing to you without putting an address, and this letter will even be sent by a messenger to a distant posting-station, because my presence here is a secret; and to tell it you might mean the ruin not of myself alone. It will be enough for you to know that I have been living at a large factory, together with Marianna, for the last fortnight. We ran away from the Sipyagins' the very day I wrote to you last. We were given

a home here by a friend. I will call him Vassily. He is the chief person here—a splendid fellow. Our stay in this factory is only temporary. We are here till the time comes for action—though, to judge by what has happened so far, this time is hardly likely ever to come! Vladimir, my heart is heavy, heavy. First of all, I must tell you that though Marianna and I have run away together, we are so far as brother and sister. She loves me . . . and has told me she will be mine if . . . I feel I have the right to ask it of her.

'Vladimir, I don't feel I have the right! She believes in me, in my honesty—I 'm not going to deceive her. I know I have never loved any one and never shall love (that 's pretty certain!) any one more than her. But, for all that, how can I unite her fate for ever to mine? A living being—to a corpse? Well, not a corpse—to a half-dead creature! Where would one's conscience be? You will say, if there were a strong passion—conscience would have nothing to say. That 's the very point that I am a corpse; an honest, well-meaning corpse, if you like. Please don't cry out that I always exaggerate. . . . All I am telling you is the truth! the truth! Marianna is a very concentrated nature, and now she is all absorbed in her activity, in which she believes. . . . While I?

'Well, enough of love and personal happiness, and everything of that sort. For the last fortnight now I have been "going to the people," and alack and alack! anything more absurd you cannot imagine. Of course, there the fault lies in me, and not in the work itself. Granted, I'm not a Slavophil; I'm not one of those who find their panacea in the people, in contact with them; I don't lay the people on my aching stomach like a flannel bandage . . . I want to have an influence on them myself; but how? How accomplish that? It appears when I am with the people that I am always only stooping to them, and listening; and when it does happen that I say anything, it's below contempt! I feel myself I'm no good. It's like a bad actor in the wrong part. Conscientiousness is quite out of place in this, and so is scepticism, and even a sort of pitiful humour directed against myself. . . . It's all not worth a brass farthing! It's positively sickening to remember; sickening to look at the rags I drag about on me, at this masquerade, as Vassily expresses it! They maintain one ought first to study the people's talk, learn their character and habits. . . . Rubbish! rubbish! rubbish! One must *believe* in what one says, and then one may say what one likes. I once chanced to hear something like a sermon from a sectarian prophet. There's

no saying what rot he talked; it was a sort of hotch-potch of ecclesiastical and bookish language, with simple peasant idioms, and that not Russian, but White Russian of some sort. . . . And you know he kept pounding away at the same thing, like a plover calling! "The spirit has dee-scended, the spirit has dee-scended!" But then his eyes were ablaze, his voice firm and hoarse, his fists clenched—he was like iron all over! The listeners did not understand, but they revered him! And they followed him! While I start speaking like a criminal—I 'm begging pardon all the while. I ought to go to the sectarians, really; their art is not great . . . but there 's the place to get faith, faith! Marianna there has faith. She 's at work from early morning, busy with Tatyana, a peasant woman here, good-natured and not a fool; by the way, she says of us that we want simplification, and calls us simplified folks;—well, Marianna busies herself with this woman, and never sits down a minute; she 's a regular ant! She 's delighted that her hands are getting red and rough; and looks forward to some day, if necessary, the scaffold! While awaiting the scaffold, she has even tried giving up shoes; she went somewhere barefoot, and came back barefoot. I heard her afterwards washing her feet a long while; I see she

walks cautiously on them—they're sore from not being used to it; but she looks as joyful, as radiant, as though she had found a treasure, as though the sun were shining on her. Yes, Marianna's first-rate! And when I try to talk to her of my feelings, to begin with, I feel somehow ashamed, as though I were laying hands on what's not mine; and then that look . . . oh, that awful, devoted, unresisting look. . . . "Take me," it seems to say . . . "*but remember!* And what need of all this? Isn't there something better, higher upon earth?" That is, in other words, "Put on your stinking overcoat, and go out to the people." . . . And so, you see, I go out to the people. . . .

'Oh, how I curse at such times my nervousness, delicacy, sensitiveness, squeamishness, all I have inherited from my aristocratic father! What right had he to shove me into life, supplying me with organs utterly unfit for the surroundings in which I must move? To hatch a chicken and shove it into the water! An artist in the mud! a democrat, a lover of the people, whom the mere smell of that loathsome vodka, "the green wine," turns ill and nearly sick?

'See what I've worked myself up to—abusing my father! And, indeed, I became

a democrat of myself; he'd no hand in that.

'Yes, Vladimir, I'm in a bad way. I have begun to be haunted by some grey, ugly thoughts! Can it be, you will ask me, that I have not even during this fortnight come across anything consolatory, any good, live person, however ignorant? What shall I say? I have met something of the sort . . . I've even come across one very fine, splendid, plucky chap. But turn it which way I will, I'm no use to him with my pamphlets, and that's all about it! Pavel—a man in the factory here—(he's Vassily's right hand, a very clever, very sharp fellow, a future "head" . . . I fancy I wrote to you about him)—he has a friend, a peasant, Elizar is his name . . . a clear brain, too, and a free spirit, untrammelled in every way; but directly we meet, it's as though there's a wall between us! his face is nothing but a "No!" And again another fellow I met with . . . he was one of the hot-tempered sort, though. "Now then, sir," says he, "no soft soap, please, but say straight out, are you giving up all your land, as it is, or not?" "What do you mean?" I answered; "I'm not a gentleman!" (and I even added, I remember, "Lord bless you!"). "But if you're a common man," says he, "what sort of sense

is there in you? Do me the favour to let me alone!"

'And another thing. I've noticed if any one listens to you very readily, takes pamphlets at once, you may be sure he's one of the wrong sort, a featherhead; or you'll come on a fine talker, an educated fellow, who can do nothing but keep repeating some favourite expression. One, for instance, simply drove me distracted; everything with him was "product." Whatever you say to him, he keeps on, "To be sure a product!" Ugh, to the devil with him One remark more. . . . Do you remember at one time, a long while ago, there used to be a great deal of talk about "superfluous" people —Hamlets? Fancy, such "superfluous" people are to be found now among the peasants! with a special tone of their own, of course. . . . Moreover, they're for the most part of consumptive build. Interesting types, and they come to us readily; but for the cause they're no good—just like the Hamlets of former days. Come, what is one to do, then? Found a secret printing-press? Why, there are books enough as it is, both of the sort, "Cross yourself and take up the hatchet," and the sort that say, "Take up the hatchet" simply. Write novels of peasant life, filled out with padding? They wouldn't get printed, most likely. Or first take up the

hatchet? . . . But against whom, with whom, what for? So that the national soldier may shoot you down with the national rifle! Well, that's a sort of complex suicide! It would be better to make an end of myself. At least I shall know when and how, and shall choose myself what part to aim at. . . . Really, I fancy if there were a war of independence going on now anywhere, I would set off there, not to liberate anybody whatever (the idea of liberating others when one's own people are not free!), but to make an end of myself.

'Our friend Vassily, the man who has taken us in here, is a happy man; he is of our camp, and a quiet fellow in a way. He's not in a hurry. Another man I should abuse for that . . . but him I can't. And it seems as though the whole basis of it doesn't lie in convictions, but in character. Vassily has a character you can't pick holes in. Well, to be sure he's right. He sits a great deal with us, with Marianna. And here's a curious fact. I love her and she loves me (I can see you smiling at that phrase, but, by God, it's so!); and we have hardly anything to say to one another. But she argues and discusses with him, and listens to him. I 'm not jealous of him; he's taking steps for getting her into some place, at least she asks him about it; only my heart aches when I look

at them. And yet imagine: if I were to falter out a word about marriage, she'd agree at once, and the priest, Zosim, would put in an appearance: "Esaias, be exalted," and all the rest in due order. Only, it would make it no better for me, and *nothing would be changed.* . . . There's no way out of it! Life's cut me on the cross, dear Vladimir, as you remember our friend the drunken tailor used to complain of his wife.

'I feel, though, that it won't last long, I feel that something is preparing. . . .

'Haven't I demanded and proved that we ought to "act"? Well, now we are going to act.

'I don't remember whether I wrote to you of another friend of mine, a dark fellow, a relation of the Sipyagins. He may, very likely, cook a kettle of fish that won't be swallowed too easily.

'I quite meant to finish this letter before, but there! Though I do nothing, nothing at all, I scribble verses. I don't read them to Marianna, she doesn't much care for them, but you . . . sometimes even praise them; and what's of most importance, you won't talk about them to any one. I have been struck by one universal phenomenon in Russia. Any way, here they are —the verses:

'SLEEP

'A long while I had not been in my own land. . . .
But I found in it no change to notice—
Everywhere the same deathlike, senseless stagnation,
Houses without roofs, walls tumbling down,
And the same filth and stench and poverty and boredom!
And the same slavish glance, now insolent, now abject!
Our people were made free; and the free arm
Hangs as before like a whip unused.
All, all is as before. . . . And in one thing alone
Europe, Asia, the whole world we have outstripped!
No! never yet have my dear countrymen
Sunk into a sleep so terrible!

'Everything is asleep; everywhere, in village and in town,
In cart, in sledge, by day, by night, sitting and standing . . .
The merchant, the official sleeps; the sentinel at his post
Stands asleep in the cold of the snow and in the burning heat!
And the prisoner sleeps; and the judge snores;
Dead asleep are the peasants; asleep, they reap and plough;
They thresh asleep; the father sleeps, the mother and children
All are asleep! He that flogs is asleep, and he too that is flogged!
Only the Tsar's gin-shop never closes an eye;
And grasping tight her pot of gin,
Her brow on the Pole and her heels on the Caucasus,
Lies in interminable sleep our country, holy Russia!

'Please forgive me: I didn't want to send you such a melancholy letter without giving you a little amusement at the end (you 'll certainly notice some halting lines . . . but what of it!). When shall I write to you again? Shall I write again? Whatever becomes of me, I am sure you will not forget your faithful friend,

'A. N.

'*P.S.*—Yes, our people is asleep. . . . But I fancy if anything ever does wake it, it won't be what *we* are thinking of. . . .'

After writing the last line Nezhdanov flung down the pen, and saying to himself, 'Well, now try to sleep and forget all this rot, rhymester'; he lay down on the bed . . . but it was long before sleep visited his eyes.

Next morning Marianna waked him, passing through his room to Tatyana; but he had only just had time to dress when she came back again. Her face expressed delight and agitation; she seemed excited.

'Do you know, Alyosha, they say that in the T—— district, not far from here, it has begun already!'

'Eh? what has begun? who says so?'

'Pavel. They say the peasants are rising refusing to pay taxes, collecting in mobs.'

'You heard that yourself?'

'Tatyana told me. But here 's Pavel himself. Ask him.'

Pavel came in and confirmed Marianna's tale.

'There 's disturbance in T—— district, that 's true!' he said, shaking his beard and screwing up his flashing black eyes. 'It 's Sergei Mihalovitch's work, one must suppose. It 's five days now he 's not been at home.'

Nezhdanov snatched up his cap.

'Where are you going?' asked Marianna.

'Where? . . . there,' he answered, scowling, and not raising his eyes; 'to T—— district.'

'Then I 'll go with you. You 'll take me, won't you? Only let me put a big kerchief over my head.'

'It 's not a woman's work,' said Nezhdanov sullenly, as before looking down as though irritated.

'No! . . . no! . . . You do right to go; or Markelov would think you a coward. . . . And I will go with you.'

'I 'm not a coward,' said Nezhdanov in the same sullen voice.

'I meant to say he would take us both for cowards. I 'm coming with you.'

Marianna went into her room for the kerchief, while Pavel uttered in a sort of stealthy

inward whistle, 'Ah-ha, aha!' and promptly vanished. He ran to warn Solomin.

Marianna had not reappeared when Solomin came into Nezhdanov's room. He was standing with his face to the window, his forehead resting on his arm, and his arm on the window-pane. Solomin touched him on the shoulder. He turned quickly round. Dishevelled and unwashed, Nezhdanov had a wild and strange look. Though indeed Solomin too had changed of late. He had grown yellow, his face looked drawn, his upper teeth were slightly visible. . . . He too seemed unhinged, so far as his 'well-balanced' nature could be.

'So Markelov could not control himself,' he began; 'this may turn out badly, for him chiefly . . . and for others too.'

'I want to go and see what 's going on . . .' observed Nezhdanov.

'And I too,' added Marianna, making her appearance in the doorway.

Solomin turned slowly to her.

'I would not advise you to, Marianna. You might betray yourself and us; without meaning to and utterly needlessly. Let Nezhdanov go and see what 's in the air a little, if he likes . . . and the less of that the better!—but why should you?'

'I don't like to stay behind when he goes.'

You will hamper him.'

Marianna glanced at Nezhdanov. He stood immovable, with an immovable, sullen face.

'But if there 's danger?' she said.

Solomin smiled.

'Don't be afraid . . . when there 's danger, I 'll let you go.'

Marianna silently took the kerchief off her head and sat down.

Then Solomin turned to Nezhdanov.

'And do you, brother, really look about a little. Perhaps it 's all exaggerated. Only, please, be careful. Some one shall go with you, though. And come back as quick as possible. You promise? Nezhdanov, do you promise?'

'Yes.'

'Yes, for certain?'

'Since every one obeys you here, Marianna and all.'

Nezhdanov went out into the passage without saying good-bye. Pavel popped up out of the darkness and ran down the staircase before him, his iron-shod boots ringing as he went. Was *he* then to accompany Nezhdanov?

Solomin sat down by Marianna.

'You heard Nezhdanov's last words?'

'Yes; he 's vexed that I listen to you more than to him. And indeed it 's the truth. I

love *him*, but I obey *you*. He's dearer to me . . . but you're nearer.'

Solomin cautiously stroked her hand with his.

'This . . . is a most unpleasant affair,' he observed at last. 'If Markelov's mixed up in it—he's lost.'

Marianna shuddered.

'Lost?'

'Yes. . . . He does nothing by halves, and he won't hide behind others.'

'Lost!' murmured Marianna again, and the tears ran down her face. 'O Vassily Fedotitch! I am very sorry for him. But why can't he be victorious? Why must he inevitably be lost?'

'Because in such undertakings, Marianna, the first always perish, even if they succeed. . . . And in the work *he*'s plotting for, not only the first and the second, but even the tenth . . . and the twentieth.'

'Then we shall never live to see it?'

'What you are dreaming of? Never. With our eyes we shall never look upon it; with these living eyes. In the spirit . . . to be sure, that's a different matter. We may gratify ourselves by the sight of it that way now, at once. There's no restriction there.'

'Then how is it you, Solomin——

'What?'

'How is it you are going along the same way?'

'Because there's no other; that is, speaking more correctly, my aim is the same as Markelov's; but our paths are different.'

'Poor Sergei Mihalovitch!' said Marianna mournfully Solomin again gave her a discreet caress.

'Come, come; there's nothing certain yet. We shall see what news Pavel brings. In our . . . work one must be of good courage. The English say, "Never say die." A good proverb. Better than the Russian, "When trouble comes, open the gates wide." It's useless lamenting beforehand.'

Solomin got up from his seat.

'And the place you meant to get me?' asked Marianna suddenly. The tears were still glistening on her cheeks, but there was no sadness in her eyes.

Solomin sat down again.

'Do you want so much to get away from here as soon as possible?'

'Oh, no! but I should like to be of use.'

'Marianna, you are of great use even here. Don't forsake us, wait a little. What is it?' Solomin asked of Tatyana, who came in.

'Well, there's some sort of a female article

asking for Alexey Dmitritch,' answered Tatyana, laughing and gesticulating. 'I was for saying that he wasn't here, not here at all. We don't know any such person, says I. But then it——'

'Who 's—it?'

'Why, this same female article took and wrote her name on this slip of paper here, and says I 'm to show it, and that 'll admit her; and that if Alexey Dmitritch really isn't at home, then she can wait.'

On the paper stood in large letters, 'Mashurina.'

'Show her in,' said Solomin. 'You won't mind, Marianna, if she comes in here? She, too, is one of ours.'

'Oh, no! indeed!'

A few seconds later Mashurina appeared in the doorway, in the same dress in which we saw her at the beginning of the first chapter.

XXXI

'Is Nezhdanov not at home?' she asked; then, seeing Solomin, she went up to him, and gave him her hand. 'How are you, Solomin?' At Marianna she simply cast a sidelong glance.

'He will soon be back,' answered Solomin. 'But let me ask, from whom did you find out . . .?'

'From Markelov. Though indeed it's known in the town . . . to two or three people already.'

'Really?'

'Yes. Some one has blabbed. Besides, they say Nezhdanov himself has been recognised.'

'So much for this dressing-up business!' muttered Solomin. 'Let me introduce you,' he added aloud. 'Miss Sinetsky, Miss Mashurin! Pray sit down!'

Mashurina gave a slight nod and sat down.

'I have a letter for Nezhdanov; and for you, Solomin, a verbal message.'

'What sort of message? From whom?'

'From a person you know. . . . How are things with you? . . . is everything ready?'

'Nothing is ready.'

Mashurina opened her tiny little eyes as wide as she could.

'Nothing?'

'Nothing.'

'You mean absolutely nothing?'

'Absolutely nothing.'

'Is that what I'm to say?'

'That's what you must say.'

Mashurina pondered a minute, then she took a cigarette out of her pocket.

'A light—can you give me?'

'Here's a match.'

Mashurina lighted her cigarette.

'They expected something quite different,' she began. 'And all around—it's not as it is with you. However, that's your affair. I'm not here for long. Only to see Nezhdanov and to give him the letter.'

'Where are you going?'

'Oh, a long way from here.' (She was in fact going to Geneva, but she did not care to tell Solomin so. She did not regard him as altogether trustworthy; besides, there was an 'outsider' sitting there. Mashurina, who hardly knew a word of German, was being sent to Geneva, in order to hand to a person there

utterly unknown to her, a torn scrap of cardboard with a vine-branch sketched on it, and two hundred and seventy-nine roubles.)

'Where's Ostrodumov? Is he with you?'

'No. He's near here . . . he got stuck on the way. But he'll come when he's wanted. Pimen's all right. No need to worry about him.'

'How did you come here?'

'In a cart . . . how else should I? Give me another match. . . .'

Solomin gave her a lighted match.

'Vassily Fedotitch!' a voice whispered all at once at the door. 'Please, sir!'

'Who's there? What do you want?'

'Please come,' the voice repeated with persuasive insistency. 'There's some strange workmen come here; they keep jawing away, and Pavel Yegoritch isn't here.'

Solomin excused himself, got up and went out.

Mashurina fell to staring at Marianna, and stared at her so long that the latter was quite out of countenance.

'Forgive me,' she said suddenly in her gruff, abrupt voice; 'I 'm a rough sort, I don't know how to put things. Don't be angry; you needn't answer if you don't want to. Are you the girl that ran away from the Sipyagins'?'

Marianna was somewhat disconcerted; however, she said, 'Yes.'

'With Nezhdanov?'

'Well, yes.'

'If you please . . . give me your hand. Forgive me, please. You must be good, since he loves you.'

Marianna pressed her hand.

'Do you know Nezhdanov well?'

'Yes, I know him. I used to see him in Petersburg. That's what makes me say so. Sergei Mihalitch, too, told me. . .'

'Ah, Markelov! You have seen him lately?'

'Yes. Now he's gone away.'

'Where?'

'Where he was ordered.'

Marianna sighed.

'Ah, Miss Mashurin, I fear for him.

'To begin with, I'm not "Miss." You ought to cast off all such manners. And, secondly . . . you say, "I fear." That won't do either. You will come not to fear for yourself, and to give up fearing for others. Though indeed I'll tell you what strikes me: it's easy for me, Fekla Mashurina, to talk like that. I'm ugly. But of course . . . you're a beauty. That must make it all the harder for you.' (Marianna looked down and turned away.) 'Sergei Mihalovitch told me. . . . He knew I

had a letter for Nezhdanov. . . . "Don't go to the factory," he said to me, "don't take the letter; it will be the breaking-up of everything there. Stay away! They're both happy there. . . . So let them be! Don't meddle!" I should be glad not to meddle . . . but what was I to do about the letter?'

'You must give it without fail,' Marianna assented. 'But oh, how kind he is, Sergei Mihalitch! Can it be that he will be killed, Mashurina . . . or be sent to Siberia?'

'Well, what then? Don't people come back from Siberia? And as for losing one's life! Life's sweet to some, and to some it's bitter. His life is not made of refined sugar either.'

Mashurina again turned an intent and inquisitive gaze on Marianna.

'Yes, you are certainly beautiful,' she cried at last, 'a perfect little bird! I'm beginning to think Alexey's not coming. . . . Shouldn't I give you the letter? Why wait?'

'I will give it him, you may rest assured.'

Mashurina rested her cheek in her hand, and for a long, long time she did not speak.

'Tell me,' she began . . . 'excuse me . . . do you love him very much?'

'Yes.'

Mashurina shook her heavy head.

'Well, there's no need to inquire whether

he loves you. I'm going, though, or perhaps I shall be too late. You tell him that I have been here . . . sent my greetings to him. Tell him Mashurina has been. You won't forget my name? No? Mashurina. And the letter. . . . Wait a bit, where have I put it to? . . .'

Mashurina stood up, turned away, making a pretence of rummaging in her pockets, but meanwhile she rapidly put into her mouth a little folded scrap of paper and swallowed it. 'Ah, my goodness! What a piece of idiocy! Can I have lost it? Lost it really is. What a misfortune! If any one were to find it! . . . No; it's nowhere. So it has turned out as Sergei Mihalitch wished, after all!'

'Look again,' whispered Marianna.

Mashurina waved her hand.

'No! What's the use? It's lost!'

Marianna went up to her.

'Well, kiss me, then!'

Mashurina suddenly took Marianna in her arms and pressed her to her bosom with more than a woman's force.

'I wouldn't have done that for anybody,' she said thickly, 'it's against my conscience . . . it's the first time! Tell him to be more careful. . . . And you too. Mind! It'll soon be a bad place for you here, very bad. Get away both of you, while . . . Good-bye!' she added

in a loud sharp voice. 'But there's something else . . . tell him. . . . No, there's no need. It's no use.'

Mashurina went out, slamming the door, and Marianna was left pondering in the middle of the room.

'What does it all mean?' she said at last; 'why, that woman loves him more than I love him! And what was the meaning of her hints? And why did Solomin go out so suddenly and not come back?'

She began walking up and down. A strange sensation—a mixture of dismay and annoyance and bewilderment—took possession of her. Why had she not gone with Nezhdanov? Solomin had dissuaded her . . . and where was he himself? And what was going on all around her? Mashurina of course had not given her that fatal letter, out of sympathy for Nezhdanov. . . . But how could she bring herself to such an act of insubordination? Did she want to show her magnanimity? What right had she? And why had *she*, Marianna, been so much touched by that action? And was she really touched by it? An ugly woman was attracted by a young man. . . . After all, what was there out of the way in that? And why did Mashurina assume that Marianna's devotion to Nezhdanov was stronger than her

sense of duty? Perhaps Marianna had not at all desired such a sacrifice! And what could have been contained in the letter? A call to immediate action? What then?

'And Markelov? He is in danger . . . and are we doing anything?' she asked herself. 'Markelov spares us both, gives us the chance of being happy, won't separate us . . . what is that? Magnanimity too . . . or contempt?

'And did we run away from that detestable house only to be together, billing and cooing like doves?'

Such were Marianna's meditations. . . . And stronger and stronger was the part played in her feelings by the same exasperated annoyance. Moreover, her vanity had been wounded. Why had every one left her alone—*every one*?

This 'fat' woman had called her a beauty, a little bird . . . why not a doll at once? And why was it Nezhdanov had gone not alone but with Pavel? As though he needed some one to look after him! And after all, what were Solomin's convictions really? He wasn't a revolutionist at all! And was it possible anyone imagined that her attitude to it all was not a serious one?

Such were the thoughts that whirled chasing one another in confusion through Marianna's

heated brain. Compressing her lips and folding her arms like a man, she sat down at last by the window, and again stayed immovable, not leaning back in her chair, all alertness and intensity, ready to spring up any minute. Go to Tatyana, work, she would not; she wanted to do one thing only; to wait! And she waited, obstinately, almost spitefully. From time to time her own mood struck her as strange and incomprehensible. . . . But it made no difference! Once it even occurred to her to wonder whether jealousy was not at the root of all her feeling. But recalling the figure of poor Mashurina, she merely shrugged her shoulders and dismissed the idea with a mental wave of her hand.

Marianna had long to wait; at last she caught the sound of two persons' steps mounting the stairs. She turned her eyes on the door . . . the steps drew nearer. The door opened and Nezhdanov, supported under Pavel's arm, appeared in the doorway. He was deadly pale, and without his cap; his dishevelled hair fell in moist tufts over his brow; his eyes were staring straight before him, seeing nothing. Pavel led him across the room (Nezhdanov's legs moved with an uncertain, feeble totter) and seated him on the sofa.

Marianna jumped up.

'What is it? What's wrong with him? Is he ill?'

But as he settled Nezhdanov, Pavel answered her with a smile, looking round over his shoulder.

'Don't worry yourself, miss, it'll soon pass off. . . . It's just from not being used to it.'

'But what is it?' Marianna queried insistently.

'He's a little tipsy. Been drinking on an empty stomach; that's all!'

Marianna bent over Nezhdanov. He was half-lying across the sofa; his head had sunk on to his breast, his eyes were glassy. . . . He smelt of spirits; he was drunk.

'Alexey!' broke from her lips.

He raised his heavy eyelids with an effort and tried to smile.

'Ah! Marianna!' he stammered, 'you always talked of sim-sim-plification; see now, I'm really simplified. For the people's always drunk, so——'

He broke off; then muttered something indistinct, closed his eyes and fell asleep. Pavel laid him carefully on the sofa.

'Don't be worried, Marianna Vikentyevna,' he repeated, 'he'll sleep a couple of hours and wake up as good as new.'

Marianna was on the point of asking how it

had happened; but her questions would have detained Pavel; and she wanted to be alone . . . that is, she did not want Pavel to see him in such a disgraceful state before her longer than could be avoided. She turned away to the window, while Pavel, who had taken in the situation at a glance, carefully covered Nezhdanov's legs with the skirts of his long coat, put a pillow under his head, once more murmured, 'It 's nothing!' and went out on tiptoe.

Marianna looked round. Nezhdanov's head sank heavily into the pillow: on his white face could be seen a tense immobility, as on the face of a man mortally sick.

'How did it happen?' she thought.

XXXII

THIS was how it had happened.

On taking his seat in the cart with Pavel, Nezhdanov suddenly fell into a state of intense excitement; and directly they drove out of the factory yard and began rolling along the highroad towards T—— district, he began shouting, stopping the peasants that passed, and addressing them in brief, disconnected sentences. 'Eh, are you asleep?' he would say. 'Rise! the time has come! Down with the taxes! Down with the landowners!' Some peasants stared at him in amazement; others went on paying no attention to his shouts; they took him for a drunken man; one even said when he had got home that he had met a Frenchman shouting some stammering, incomprehensible stuff. Nezhdanov had enough sense to know how unutterably stupid and even meaningless what he was doing was; but he gradually worked himself up to such a point that he did not realise what was sense and what was non-

sense. Pavel tried to quiet him, told him he couldn't really go on like that; that soon they would reach a large village, the first on the borders of T—— district, 'Lasses' Springs,' —that there they could reconnoitre. . . . But Nezhdanov did not listen . . . and at the same time his face was strangely sad, almost despairing. Their horse was a very plucky round little beast with a clipped mane on his scraggy neck; he plied his sturdy little legs very actively, and kept pulling at the reins, as though he were hastening to the scene of action and taking persons of importance there. Before they reached 'Lasses' Springs,' Nezhdanov noticed, just off the road, before an open corn barn, eight peasants; he sprang at once out of the cart, ran up to them with sudden shouts and backhanded gestures. The words, 'Freedom! forward! Shoulder to shoulder!' could be distinguished, hoarse and noisy, above a multitude of other words less comprehensible. The peasants, who had met before the granary to deliberate how it could be filled, if only in appearance (it was the commune granary, and consequently empty) stared at Nezhdanov and seemed to be listening to his address with great attention; but can hardly have understood much, as when at last he rushed away from them, shouting for the last time, 'Freedom!'

one of them, the most acute, shook his head with an air of deep reflection, and commented, 'Wasn't he severe?' while another observed, 'Some captain, seemingly!' to which the acute peasant rejoined, 'To be sure—he wouldn't strain his throat for nothing. That's what they give us nowadays for our money!' Nezhdanov himself, as he clambered into the cart and sat beside Pavel, thought to himself, 'Lord! what idiocy! But there, not one of us knows just how one ought to stir up the people—isn't that it, perhaps? There's no time to analyse now. Tear along! Does your heart ache? Let it!'

They drove into the village street. In the very middle of it a good many peasants were crowding round a tavern. Pavel tried to restrain Nezhdanov; but he flew head over heels out of the cart, and with a wailing shout of 'Brothers!' he was in the crowd. . . . It parted a little; and Nezhdanov again fell to preaching, looking at no one, in a violent passion as it seemed, and almost weeping.

But here the result that followed was quite different. A gigantic fellow with a beardless but ferocious face, in a short greasy coat, high boots, and a sheepskin cap, went up to Nezhdanov, and clapping him on the shoulder with all his might, 'Bravo! you're a fine chap!'

he bellowed in a voice of thunder; 'but stop a bit! don't you know, dry words scorch the mouth? Come this way! It 's much handier talking here.' He dragged Nezhdanov into the tavern; the rest of the crowd trooped in after them. 'Miheitch!' bawled the young giant, 'look sharp! two penn'orth! My favourite tap! I 'm treating a friend! Who he is, what 's his family, and where he 's from, old Nick knows, but he 's laying into the gentry pretty hot. Drink!' he said turning to Nezhdanov, and handing him a full heavy glass, moist all over the outside as though perspiring, 'drink—if you 've really any feeling for the likes of us!' 'Drink!' rose a noisy chorus around. Nezhdanov grasped the pot (he was in a sort of nightmare), shouted, 'To your health, lads!' and emptied it at a gulp. Ugh! He drank it off with the same desperate heroism with which he would have flung himself on a storm of battery or a row of bayonets. . . . But what was happening in him? Something seemed to dart along his spine and down his legs, to set his throat, his chest, and his stomach on fire, to drive the tears into his eyes. . . . A shudder of nausea passed all over him, and with difficulty he kept it down. . . . He shouted at the top of his voice, if only to drown the throbbing in his head. The dark tavern room seemed suddenly

hot, sticky, stifling, full of crowds of people! Nezhdanov began talking, talking endlessly shouting wrathfully, malignantly, shaking broad, horny hands, kissing slobbery beards. . . . The young giant in the coat kissed him too, he almost crushed his ribs in. And he showed himself a perfect demon. 'I'll split his gullet for him!' he roared, 'I'll split his gullet for him! if any one's rude to our brother! or else I'll pound his skull into a jelly. . . . I'll make him squeak! I'm up to it, I am; I've been a butcher; I'm a good hand at that sort of job!' And he shook his huge freckled fist. . . . And then, good God! some one bellowed again, 'Drink!' and again Nezhdanov gulped down that loathsome poison. But this second time it was terrible! He seemed to be full of blunt hooks tearing him to pieces inside. His head was on fire, green circles were going round before his eyes. There was a loud roar, a ringing in his ears. . . . Oh, horror! A third pot. . . . Was it possible he had emptied it? Purple noses seemed to creep up close and hem him in, and dusty heads of hair, and tanned necks and throats ploughed over with networks of wrinkles. Rough hands caught hold of him. 'Hold on!' raging voices were bawling. 'Talk away! The day before yesterday another, a stranger, talked like that. Go

on! . . .' The earth seem reeling under Nezhdanov's feet. His own voice sounded strange to him, as if it came from a long way off. . . . Was it death, or what?

And all of a sudden . . . a sense of the fresh air on his face, and no more hubbub, no red faces, no stench of spirits, sheepskins, pitch and leather. . . . And again he was sitting in the cart with Pavel, at first struggling and shouting, 'Stop! Where are you off to? I 'd not time to tell them anything, I must explain . . .' then adding, 'And you yourself, you sly devil, what are your views?' To which Pavel replied, 'It would be nice if there were no gentry, and the land was all ours—what could be better? but there 's been no order to that effect so far'; while he stealthily turned his horse's head, and suddenly lashing him on the back with the reins, set off at full trot away from the din and clamour . . . to the factory. . . .

Nezhdanov dozed and was jolted about, but the wind blew sweetly in his face, and kept back gloomy thoughts.

Only he was vexed that he had not been allowed to explain himself fully. . . . And again the wind soothed his heated face.

And then the momentary vision of Marianna, a momentary burning sense of disgrace, and sleep, heavy, deathlike sleep. . . .

All this Pavel told afterwards to Solomin. He made no secret of the fact that he had not hindered Nezhdanov's getting drunk . . . he could not have got him away else. The others wouldn't have let him go.

'But there, when he was getting quite feeble I begged them with many bows: "Honest gentlemen," says I, "let the poor boy go; see, he's quite young. . . ." And so they let him go. "Only give us half a rouble for ransom," says they. And so I gave it them.'

'Quite right,' said Solomin approvingly.

Nezhdanov slept; and Marianna sat at the window and looked into the little enclosure. And, strange to say, the angry, almost wicked thoughts and feelings that had been astir within her before Nezhdanov's arrival with Pavel left her all at once; Nezhdanov himself was far from being repulsive or disgusting to her; she pitied him. She knew very well that he was neither a rake nor a drunkard, and was already pondering what to say to him when he should wake up: something affectionate, that he might not be too much distressed and ashamed. 'I must manage so that he should tell of his own accord how this mishap befell him.'

She was not excited; but she felt sad . . . desperately sad. It was as if a breath had

blown upon her from that real world which she had been struggling to reach . . . and she shuddered at its coarseness and darkness. What Moloch was this to which she was going to sacrifice herself?

But no! It could not be! This was nothing; it was a chance event, and would be over directly.

It was the impression of an instant, which had impressed her only because it was unexpected. She got up, went to the sofa, on which Nezhdanov was lying, passed a handkerchief over his pale brow, which was contracted with suffering even in his sleep, and pushed back his hair. . . .

Again she felt sorry for him, as a mother pities her sick child. But it made her heart ache a little to look at him, and she softly went away into her room, leaving the door ajar.

She did not take up any work, and sat down again, and again a mood of musing came upon her. She felt the time melting away, minute after minute flying past, and it was positively sweet to her to feel it, and her heart beat, and again she fell to waiting for something.

Where had Solomin got to?

The door creaked softly, and Tatyana came into the room.

'What do you want?' asked Marianna almost with annoyance.

'Marianna Vikentyevna,' began Tatyana in an undertone, 'look here. Don't you upset yourself, for it 's a thing that will happen in life, and thank God too——'

'I 'm not the least upset, Tatyana Osipovna, Marianna cut her short. 'Alexey Dmitritch isn't quite well; it's of no great consequence! . . .'

'Well, now, that 's first-rate! But here have I been thinking, my Marianna Vikentyevna doesn't come, what 's wrong with her, thinks I? But for all that I wouldn't have come in to you, for in such cases the first rule is "mind your own business!" Only here 's some one—I don't know who—come to the factory. A little man like this, and a bit lame; and nothing 'll content him but to get at Alexey Dmitritch! It seems so queer; this morning that female came asking for him . . . and now here 's this lame man. "And if," says he, "Alexey Dmitritch 's not here," we 're to let him see Vassily Fedotitch! "I won't go without," says he, "for," says he, "it 's very important business." We try to pack him off like that female; tell him Vassily Fedotitch isn't here . . . has gone away, but this lame man keeps on, "I 'm not going," says he, "if I 've to wait till midnight. . . ." So he 's walking in the yard. Here, come this way into the passage; you can see him from the window. . . . Can

you tell me what sort of a fine gentleman he is?'

Marianna followed Tatyana—she had to pass close by Nezhdanov—and again she noticed his brow contracted painfully, and again she passed her handkerchief over it. Through the dusty window-pane she caught sight of the visitor, of whom Tatyana had been speaking. He was a stranger to her. But at that very instant Solomin came into sight round the corner of the house.

The little lame man went rapidly to him, and held out his hand. Solomin took it. He obviously knew the man. Both of them vanished. . . .

But now their steps could be heard on the stairs. . . . They were coming up. . . .

Marianna went back hurriedly into her room and stood still in the middle, hardly able to breathe. She felt dread . . . of what? She did not know.

Solomin's head appeared in the doorway.

'Marianna Vikentyevna, allow us to come in to you. I have brought a person whom it 's absolutely necessary for you to see.'

Marianna merely nodded in reply, and behind Solomin in walked—Paklin.

XXXIII

'I'M a friend of your husband's,' he said, bowing low to Marianna and trying, as it seemed, to conceal his scared and excited face; 'I'm a friend, too, of Vassily Fedotitch's. Alexey Dmitritch is asleep; he is, I hear, unwell; and I have unfortunately brought bad news, which I have already communicated in part to Vassily Fedotitch, and in consequence of which decisive measures must be taken.'

Paklin's voice broke continually, like that of a man who is parched and tortured by thirst. The news he brought was really very bad! Markelov had been seized by the peasants and carried off to the town. The stupid clerk had betrayed Golushkin; he had been arrested. He, in his turn, was betraying everything and every one, was eager to go over to orthodoxy, was offering to present the high school with the portrait of the bishop Filaret, and had already forwarded five thousand roubles for distribution among 'crippled soldiers.' There

was not a shadow of doubt that he had betrayed Nezhdanov; the police might make a raid upon the factory any minute. Vassily Fedotitch, too, was in some danger. 'As far as I 'm concerned,' added Paklin, 'I 'm surprised really that I 'm still walking about at liberty; though to be sure I have never taken any part precisely in politics and had no hand in any plans. I have taken advantage of this forgetfulness or oversight on the part of the police to warn you and consult you as to what means may be employed . . . to avert all unpleasantness.'

Marianna heard Paklin to the end. She was not frightened—she even remained perfectly serene. . . . But to be sure, some steps would have to be taken! Her first action was to look to Solomin.

He, too, seemed composed; only the muscles were faintly twitching about his lips, with something unlike his habitual smile.

He understood what her look meant; she was waiting for him to say what steps were to be taken.

'It 's rather a ticklish business, certainly,' he began; 'it would be as well, I imagine, for Nezhdanov to keep in hiding for a time. By the way, how did you learn that he was here, Mr. Paklin?'

Paklin waved his hand.

'An individual told me. He'd seen him wandering about the neighbourhood making propaganda. Well, he kept an eye on him, though with no evil intent. He is a sympathiser. Pardon me,' he added, turning to Marianna, 'but really, our friend Nezhdanov has been very . . . very indiscreet.'

'It's no use blaming him now,' Solomin began again. 'It's a pity we can't talk things over with him; but his indisposition will be over by to-morrow, and the police are not so rapid in their movements as you imagine. You, too, Marianna Vikentyevna, ought to go away with him, I suppose.'

'Undoubtedly,' Marianna replied, thickly but resolutely.

'Yes,' said Solomin. 'We shall have to think things over; we shall have to find ways and means.'

'Allow me to lay one idea before you,' began Paklin; 'the idea entered my head as I came in here. I hasten to observe that I dismissed the cabman from the town, a mile away.'

'What is your idea?' asked Solomin.

'I'll tell you. Let me have horses at once . . . and I will gallop off to the Sipyagins.'

'To the Sipyagins!' repeated Marianna. . . . 'What for?'

'You shall hear.'

'But do you know them?'

'Not in the least! But listen. Consider my proposition thoroughly. It seems to me simply a stroke of genius. You see, Markelov's Sipyagin's brother-in-law, his wife's brother. Isn't that so? Is it possible that gentleman will do nothing to save him? And moreover, Nezhdanov himself! Granting that Mr. Sipyagin is angry with him. . . . Still, you see, for all that, Nezhdanov has become a relation of his by marrying you. And the danger hanging over our friend's head——'

'I 'm not married,' observed Marianna.

Paklin positively started.

'What? Not managed that all this time! Well, never mind,' he went on; 'one can fib a little. It 's just the same thing; you 're going to be married directly. Indeed, one can't devise any other plan! Take into consideration the fact that Sipyagin up till now has not gone so far as to persecute you. Consequently, he has a certain . . . magnanimity. I see that expression 's not to your taste; let 's say, a certain affectation of generosity. Why shouldn't we utilise it in the present case? Think of it!'

Marianna raised her head and passed her hand over her hair.

'You may utilise what you please for Mar-

kelov's benefit, Mr. Paklin . . . or for your own; but Alexey and I desire neither the protection nor the patronage of Mr. Sipyagin. We did not leave his house to go knocking at his door as beggars. We will owe nothing either to the magnanimity nor the affectation of generosity of Mr. Sipyagin or his wife!'

'Those are most praiseworthy sentiments,' responded Paklin (but, 'My! that's a nice wet blanket!' was his inward comment), 'though, on the other hand, if you come to reflect . . . However, I am ready to obey you. I will exert myself on Markelov's account, our dear, good Markelov only! I venture only to observe that he is not his blood relation, but only related to him through his wife, while you——'

'Mr. Paklin, I beg you!'

'Oh, yes . . . yes! But I can't refrain from expressing my regret, for Sipyagin is a man of great influence.'

'So you've no fears for yourself?' queried Solomin.

Paklin straightened his chest.

'At such moments one must not think of oneself,' he said proudly. And all the while, it was just of himself he was thinking. He wanted (poor, feeble little creature!) to be the first in the field, as the saying is. On the

strength of the service rendered him, Sipyagin might, if need arose, speak a word for him. For as a fact, he too—say what he would—was implicated; he had listened . . . and even gone chattering about himself.

'I think your idea 's not a bad one,' observed Solomin at last, 'though I put little confidence in its success. Any way, you can try. You will do no harm.'

'Of course not. Come, supposing the very worst; suppose they kick me out. . . . What harm will that do?'

'There 'll certainly be no harm in that. . . .' (*'Merci!'* thought Paklin.) While Solomin went on: 'What o'clock is it? Five o'clock. No time to waste. You shall have the horses directly. Pavel!'

But instead of Pavel, on the threshold they saw Nezhdanov. He staggered, steadying himself on the doorpost, and opening his mouth feebly, stared with bewildered eyes, comprehending nothing.

Paklin was the first to approach him.

'Alyosha!' he cried, 'you know me, don't you?'

Nezhdanov gazed at him, blinking slowly.

'Paklin?' he said at last.

'Yes, yes; it 's I. You are not well?'

'Yes . . . I 'm not well. But . . . why are you here?'

'I 'm here . . .' But at that instant Marianna stealthily touched Paklin on the elbow. He looked round, and saw she was making signs to him. . . . 'Ah, yes!' he muttered. 'Yes . . . to be sure! Well, do you see, Alyosha,' he added aloud, 'I 've come on important business, and must go on further at once. . . . Solomin will tell you all about it—and Marianna . . . Marianna Vikentyevna. They both fully approve of my plan—it 's a matter that concerns us all: that is, no, no,' he interpolated hurriedly in response to a gesture and a glance from Marianna. . . . 'It 's a matter concerning Markelov, our common friend Markelov; him alone. But now, good-bye! Every minute 's precious—good-bye, friend. . . . We shall meet again. Vassily Fedotitch, will you come with me to give orders about the horses?'

'Certainly. Marianna, I 'd meant to say to you, keep up your spirits! But there 's no need. You 're the real thing!'

'Oh, yes! oh, yes!' chimed in Paklin: 'you're a Roman woman of the time of Cato! Cato of Utica! But come along, Vassily Fedotitch, let us go!'

'You 've plenty of time,' observed Solomin with a lazy smile. Nezhdanov moved a little aside to let them both pass. . . . But there was still the same uncomprehending look in his

eyes. Then he took two steps, and slowly sat down on a chair facing Marianna.

'Alexey,' she said to him, 'everything is discovered; Markelov has been seized by the peasants he was trying to incite; he's under arrest in the town, and so is that merchant you dined with; most likely the police will soon be here after us. Paklin has gone to Sipyagin.'

'What for?' muttered Nezhdanov, hardly audibly. But his eyes grew clearer, his face regained its ordinary expression. The stupor had left him instantly.

'To try whether he will intercede.'

Nezhdanov drew himself up. . . . 'For us?'

'No; for Markelov. He wanted to beg for us too . . . but I would not let him. Did I do right, Alexey?'

'Right?' said Nezhdanov, and without getting up from his chair, he held out his hands to her. 'Right?' he repeated, and, drawing her close to him and hiding his face against her, he suddenly burst into tears.

'What is it, dear? what is it?' cried Marianna. Now, too, as on that day when he had fallen on his knees before her, faint and breathless with a sudden torrent of passion, she laid her two hands on his trembling head.

But what she felt now was not at all what

she had felt then. Then she had given herself up to him. She had submitted, and simply waited for what he would say to her. Now she pitied him, and thought of nothing but how to comfort him.

'What is it, dear?' she said. 'What are you crying for? Surely not because you came home in rather . . . a strange state! That can't be! Or are you sorry for Markelov, and afraid for me and you? Or are you grieving for our shattered hopes? You didn't expect everything to run smoothly, you know!'

Nezhdanov suddenly raised his head.

'No, Marianna,' he said, gulping down his sobs, 'I 'm not afraid for you nor for myself. . . . But yes . . . I am sorry——'

'For whom?'

'For you, Marianna! I 'm sorry you have bound up your life with a man unworthy of it.'

'Why so?'

'Well, if only because he can be shedding tears at such a moment!'

'It 's not you weeping; it 's your nerves!'

'My nerves and I are all one! Come, Marianna, look me in the face: can you really say now that you don't regret . . '

'What?'

'That you ran away with me?'

'No.'

'And will you go further with me? Everywhere?'

'Yes!'

'Yes? Marianna . . . Yes?'

'Yes. I have given you my word, and so long as you are the man I loved, I will not take it back.'

Nezhdanov went on sitting in his chair; Marianna stood before him. His arms lay about her waist; her hands rested on his shoulders. 'Yes, no,' thought Nezhdanov . . . 'but yet—before, when it was my lot to hold her in my arms, just as at this moment, her body was at least motionless; but now, I feel it gently and perhaps against her will shrink away from me!' He loosened his arms . . . Marianna did, in fact, scarcely perceptibly draw back.

'I tell you what!' he said aloud, 'if we must run away . . . before the police discover us . . . I suppose it would be as well for us to be married first. Most likely we shouldn't meet with such an accommodating priest as Zosim anywhere else!'

'I 'm ready,' said Marianna.

Nezhdanov looked intently at her.

'Roman maiden!' he said with an evil half smile. 'What a sense of duty!'

Marianna shrugged her shoulders.

'We must speak to Solomin.'

'Yes . . . Solomin . . .' Nezhdanov drawled. 'But he too, I suppose, is in some danger. The police will seize him too. It strikes me he has done more and known more about it than I.'

'I know nothing about that,' said Marianna. 'He never talks about himself.'

'Unlike me in that!' thought Nezhdanov. 'That was what she meant! Solomin . . . Solomin,' he repeated after a long silence. 'Do you know, Marianna, I should not pity you, if the man with whom you had linked your life for ever had been like Solomin . . . or had been Solomin himself.'

Marianna, in her turn, looked intently at Nezhdanov.

'You had no right to say that,' she said finally.

'I 'd no right! How am I to understand those words? Do they mean that you love me? or that I ought not any way to touch on that question?'

'You had no right to say it,' repeated Marianna.

Nezhdanov's head drooped.

'Marianna!' he articulated in a somewhat changed voice.

'Well?'

'If I were now . . . if I put you that ques-

tion—you know? . . . No, I ask nothing of you . . . good-bye.'

He got up and went out; Marianna did not try to keep him. Nezhdanov sat down on the sofa and hid his face in his hands. He was frightened by his own thoughts, and tried not to think. He had one feeling only, that a sort of dark, underground hand seemed to have clutched at the very root of his being, and would not let him go. He knew that that sweet, precious woman he had left in the next room would not come out to him; and he dared not go in to her. And what would be the use? What could he say?

Rapid, resolute footsteps made him open his eyes.

Solomin walked across his room, and, knocking at Marianna's door, went in.

'Make way for your betters!' muttered Nezhdanov in a bitter whisper.

XXXIV

IT was ten o'clock in the evening in the drawing-room of the mansion of Arzhano. Sipyagin, his wife, and Kallomyetsev were playing cards, when a footman came in and announced the arrival of a stranger, Mr. Paklin, who wanted to see Boris Andreitch on the most urgent and important business.

'So late!' wondered Valentina Mihalovna.

'Eh?' queried Boris Andreitch, wrinkling up his handsome nose. 'What did you say was the gentleman's name?'

'He said Paklin, sir.'

'Paklin!' cried Kallomyetsev. 'A truly rural name. Paklin' (*i.e.* stuffing) '. . . Solomin' (*i.e.* strawing) '. . . *De vrais noms ruraux, hein?*'

'And you say,' pursued Boris Andreitch, turning to the footman with the same expression of displeasure, 'that his business is important, urgent?'

'So the gentleman says, sir.'

'H'm . . . some beggar or swindler' ('Or both

together,' put in Kallomyetsev). 'Quite likely. Ask him into my study.' Boris Andreitch got up. '*Pardon, ma bonne.* Have a game of écarté while I 'm gone, or wait for me. I 'll be back directly.'

'*Nous causerons . . . allez!*' said Kallomyetsev. When Sipyagin came into his study and saw Paklin's pitiful, feeble little figure meekly huddled against the wall between the fireplace and the door, he was seized with that truly ministerial sensation of lofty compassion and fastidious condescension so characteristic of the Petersburg higher official.

'Mercy on us! What a poor little plucked bird!' he thought, 'and I do believe he 's lame too!'

'Be seated,' he said aloud, giving vent to the benevolent baritone notes of his voice, and affably throwing back his little head; and he took a seat before his visitor.

'You are tired from your journey, I presume; take a seat, and let me hear what is the important business that has brought you to me so late.'

'Your Excellency,' began Paklin, dropping discreetly into a chair, 'I have made bold to come to you——'

'Wait a bit, wait a bit,' Sipyagin interrupted him; 'I 've seen you before. I never forget a

face I have once met; I always recollect it. Eh . . . eh . . . eh . . . precisely . . . where have I met you?'

'You are right, your Excellency. . . . I had the honour of meeting you in Petersburg at a person's who . . . who . . . since then . . . has unfortunately . . . incurred your displeasure.'

Sipyagin got up quickly from his chair.

'At Mr. Nezhdanov's! I remember now. Surely you haven't come from him?'

'Oh, no, your Excellency; quite the contrary . . . I . . .'

Sipyagin sat down again.

'That's as well. For in that case I would promptly have asked you to leave the house. I can give no admittance to any mediator between me and Mr. Nezhdanov. Mr. Nezhdanov has shown me one of those affronts which are not forgotten. . . . I am above revenge, but I wish to know nothing of him, nor of the girl—more depraved in mind than in heart' (this phrase Sipyagin must have repeated thirty times since Marianna's flight)—'who could bring herself to leave the home where she had been cared for to become the mistress of a base-born adventurer! It's enough for them that I consent to forget them!'

At this last word Sipyagin made a downward motion of his wrist away from him.

'I forget them, sir!'

'Your Excellency, I have already submitted to you that I have not come here from them, though I may nevertheless inform your Excellency, among other things, that they are already joined in the bonds of lawful matrimony.' . . . ('There, it's all one!' thought Paklin; 'I said I'd lie a bit here, and I'm lying. Here goes!')

Sipyagin moved his head restlessly to right and left against the back of his easy-chair.

'That is a matter of no interest to me, sir. One foolish marriage the more in the world, that's all. But what is this most urgent business to which I am indebted for the pleasure of your visit?'

'Ugh! the damned director of a department!' Paklin thought again. 'That's enough of your airs and graces, you ugly English monkey-face.'

'Your wife's brother,' he said aloud—'Mr. Markelov—has been seized by the peasants he had meant to incite to insurrection, and is now in custody in the governor's house.'

Sipyagin jumped up a second time.

'What . . . what did you say?' he stammered, not at all in his ministerial baritone, but in a sort of piteous guttural.

'I said your brother-in-law had been seized

and is in chains. Directly I learned this fact, I took horses and came to warn you. I imagined that I might be rendering a service both to you and to that unfortunate man whom you may be able to save!'

'I am much obliged to you,' said Sipyagin in the same feeble voice; and with a violent blow on a bell shaped like a mushroom, he filled the whole house with its clear, metallic ring. 'I am much obliged to you,' he repeated more sharply; 'though let me tell you, a man who has trampled underfoot every law, human and divine, were he a hundred times my kinsman, is in my eyes not to be pitied; he is a criminal!'

A footman darted into the room.

'Your orders, sir?'

'The coach! This minute the coach and four! I am driving to the town. Filip and Stepan to come with me!' The footman darted out. 'Yes, sir, my brother-in-law is a criminal; and I am driving to the town, not to save him! Oh, no!'

'But, your Excellency . . .

'Such are my principles, sir; and I beg you not to trouble me with objections!'

Sipyagin fell to walking up and down the room, while Paklin's eyes grew round as saucers. 'Ugh, you devil!' he was thinking; 'and you

call yourself a liberal! Why, you 're a roaring lion!' The door opened, and with quick steps there entered first Valentina Mihalovna, and behind her Kallomyetsev.

'What is the meaning of this, Boris? you have ordered the coach out? you are going to the town? what has happened?'

Sipyagin went up to his wife, and took her by her arm, between the wrist and the elbow. '*Il faut vous armer de courage, ma chère.* Your brother is arrested.'

'My brother? Sergei? What for?'

'He has been preaching Socialistic theories to the peasants!' (Kallomyetsev gave vent to a faint whistle.) 'Yes! He has been preaching revolution! he has been making propaganda! They seized him, and gave him up. Now he 's —in the town.'

'The madman! But who has told you this?'

'Mr. . . . Mr. . . what's his name? Mr. Konopatin brought this news.'

Valentina Mihalovna glanced at Paklin. He gave a forlorn bow. 'My! what an elegant female!' was his thought. Even at such painful moments . . . alas, how susceptible was poor Paklin to feminine charms!

'And you mean to go to the town—so late?

'I shall find the governor still up.'

'I always predicted that it must end so,' put in Kallomyetsev. 'It could not be otherwise! But what splendid chaps our Russian peasants are! Delightful! *Pardon, madame, c'est votre frère! Mais la vérité avant tout!*'

'Can you really mean to go, Boris?' asked Valentina Mihalovna.

'I 'm convinced too,' continued Kallomyetsev, 'that that fellow too, that *tutor*, Mr. Nezhdanov, has had a hand in it. *J'en mettrais ma main au feu.* They 're all in one boat! Has he been caught? You don't know?'

Again Sipyagin made a downward gesture from his wrist.

'I don't know, and I don't want to know! By the way,' he added, turning to his wife, '*il paraît qu'ils sont mariés.*'

'Who said so? The same gentleman?' Valentina Mihalovna again looked at Paklin, but this time she screwed up her eyes as she did so.

'Yes.'

'In that case,' put in Kallomyetsev, 'he knows where they are for a certainty. Do you know where they are? Do you know where they are? Eh? eh? eh? Do you know?' Kallomyetsev began pacing up and down before Paklin, as though to bar the way to him, though the latter showed not the faintest

inclination to escape. 'Speak! Answer! Eh? Eh? Do you know? Do you know?'

'If I did know,' Paklin said with annoyance —his wrath was stirred at last and his little eyes flashed—'if I did know, I should not tell you.'

'Oh . . . oh . . . oh!' muttered Kallomyetsev. 'You hear . . . you hear! Why, this fellow, too . . . this fellow, too, must be one of their gang!'

'The coach is ready!' a footman announced. Sipyagin seized his hat with a graceful, resolute gesture; but Valentina Mihalovna begged him with such insistence to put off going till next morning — she laid before nim such cogent reasons, the darkness on the road, and every one would be asleep in the town, and he would merely be upsetting his nerves and might catch cold—that Sipyagin at last was persuaded by her, and exclaiming, 'I obey!' with a gesture as graceful, but no onger resolute, he laid his hat on the table.

'Take out the horses!' he commanded the footman; 'but to-morrow at six in the morning precisely, let them be ready! Do you hear? You can go! Stop! The visitor . . . the gentleman's conveyance can be dismissed! Pay the man! Eh? I fancy you spoke, Mr. Konopatin? I 'll take you with me to-morrow,

Mr. Konopatin! What do you say? I don't hear. . . . You will take some vodka, I dare say? Some vodka for Mr. Konopatin! No! You don't drink it? In that case, Fyodor, show the gentleman to the green room! Good-night, Mr. Kono——'

Paklin lost all patience at last.

'Paklin!' he roared, 'my name is Paklin!'

'Yes, yes; well, that's much the same. It's not unlike, you know. But what a powerful voice you have for one of your build! Good-night, Mr. Paklin. . . . I've got it right now, eh? *Siméon, vous viendrez avec nous?*'

'*Je crois bien!*'

And Paklin was led off to the green room. And he was even locked in there. As he got into bed, he heard the key turn in the ringing English lock. Violently he swore at himself for his 'stroke of genius,' and he slept very badly.

Early next morning, at half-past five, he was called. Coffee was handed him; while he drank it, a footman with embroidered shoulder-knots waited with the tray in his hands, and shifted from one leg to the other, as though he would say, 'Hurry up, you're keeping the gentlemen waiting!' Then he was conducted downstairs. The coach was already standing before the house. There, too, was Kallom-

yetsev's open carriage. Sipyagin made his appearance on the steps in a camel's-hair cloak with a round collar. Such cloaks had not been worn for many years except by a certain very important dignitary whom Sipyagin was trying to please and to imitate. On important official occasions, therefore, he wore such a cloak.

Sipyagin greeted Paklin fairly affably, and with an energetic gesture motioned him to the coach and asked him to take his seat. 'Mr. Paklin, you will come with me, Mr. Paklin! Put Mr. Paklin's bag on the box! I am taking Mr. Paklin!' he said, with an emphasis on the word Paklin, and an accent on the letter *a*, as though he would say, 'You 've a name like that and presume to feel insulted when people change it for you! There you are, then! Take plenty of it! I 'll give you as much as you want! Mr. Paklin! Paklin!' The unlucky name kept resounding in the keen morning air. It was so keen as to set Kallomyetsev, who came out after Sipyagin, muttering several times in French, 'B-r-r-r! B-r-r-r! B-r-r-r!' and wrapping himself more closely in his cloak he seated himself in his elegant open carriage. (His poor friend the Servian prince, Mihal Obrenovitch, on seeing it had bought one exactly like it at Binder's . . . *vous savez Binder, le grand carrossier des Champs-Élysées?*)

From the half-open shutters of a bedroom Valentina Mihalovna peeped out 'in the trailing garments of the night,' as the poet has it.

Sipyagin took his seat and kissed his hand to her.

'Are you comfortable, Mr. Paklin? Drive on!'

'*Je vous recommande mon frère ; épargnez-le!*' Valentina Mihalovna was heard to say.

'*Soyez tranquille!*' cried Kallomyetsev, glancing smartly up at her from under the edge of a travelling-cap that he had designed himself, with a cockade in it. . . . '*C'est surtout l'autre qu'il faut pincer!*'

'Drive on!' repeated Sipyagin. 'Mr. Paklin, you're not cold? Drive on!'

The two carriages rolled away.

For the first ten minutes both Sipyagin and Paklin were silent. The luckless Sila in his shabby little suit and greasy cap seemed a still more pitiful figure against the dark-blue background of the rich silky material with which the inside of the coach was upholstered. In silence he looked round at the delicate, pale-blue blinds that ran up rapidly at a mere finger's touch on a button, and at the rug of soft white sheepskin at their feet, and the box of red wood fitted in in front, with a movable tray desk for letters, and even a shelf for books. (Boris

Andreitch did not much care to work in his coach, but he wished to make people believe he liked to work on his journeys like Thiers.) Paklin felt intimidated. Sipyagin glanced at him twice over his glossily shaven cheek, and with majestic deliberation pulled out of his side-pocket a silver cigar-case with a curly monogram on it in old Slavonic type, and offered him . . . positively offered him a cigar, balancing it between the second and third fingers of a hand in an English glove of yellow dogskin.

'I don't smoke,' muttered Paklin.

'Ah!' responded Sipyagin, and he himself lighted the cigar, which appeared to be a most choice regalia.

'I ought to tell you . . . dear Mr. Paklin,' he began, puffing affably at his cigar, and emitting delicate rings of fragrant smoke . . . 'that I . . . am in reality . . . very grateful . . . to you. . . . I may have seemed . . . somewhat short . . . to you yesterday . . . though that is not . . . a characteristic . . . of mine at all' (Sipyagin intentionally cut his sentence up meaningly), 'I venture to assure you of that. But, Mr. Paklin, put yourself in my . . . place' (Sipyagin rolled the cigar from one corner of his mouth to the other). 'The position I occupy makes me . . . so to say . . . con-

spicuous; and all of a sudden . . . my wife's brother . . . compromises himself . . . and me in this incredible manner! Eh! Mr. Paklin? You perhaps think that's of no great matter?'

'I don't think that, your Excellency.'

'You don't know for what precisely . . . and where exactly, he was arrested?'

'I heard it was in T—— district.'

'From whom did you hear that?'

'From . . . from a man.'

'Well, it would hardly be from a bird. But what man?'

'From . . . from an assistant of the director of the business of the governor's office.'

'What's his name?'

'The director?'

'No, the assistant.'

'His . . . his name is Ulyashevitch. He's a very good public servant, your Excellency. When I heard of that occurrence, I hurried at once to you.'

'To be sure, to be sure! And I repeat that I am very grateful to you. But what madness! Isn't it madness? eh? Mr. Paklin? eh?'

'Perfect madness!' cried Paklin, and the perspiration zigzagged in a hot rivulet down his back. 'It comes,' he went on, 'of not in the least understanding the Russian peasant. Mr. Markelov, so far as I know him, has a very

kind and generous heart; but he has never understood the Russian peasant' (Paklin glanced at Sipyagin, who, turning slightly towards him, was scanning him with a chilly but not hostile expression). 'The Russian peasant cannot ever be induced to revolt except by taking advantage of his devotion to a higher authority, some sort of Tsar. Some sort of legend must be invented—you remember the false Demetrius—some sort of regal insignia, branded in burnt patches on the breast.'

'Yes, yes, like Pugatchev,' interrupted Sipyagin in a tone that seemed to say, 'I 've not forgotten my history . . . you needn't enlarge!' and adding, 'It's madness! madness!' he turned to the contemplation of the swift coil of smoke rising from the end of his cigar.

'Your Excellency!' observed Paklin, gathering courage, 'I told you just now I didn't smoke . . . but that's not quite accurate. I do smoke at times; and your cigar smells so delicious. . . .'

'Eh? what? what 's that?' said Sipyagin, as though waking up; and without letting Paklin repeat what he had said, he proved in the most unmistakable manner that he had heard him, and had uttered his reiterated questions solely for the sake of his dignity, by offering him his open cigar-case.

Paklin discreetly and gratefully lighted a cigar.

'Now, I fancy, is a good moment,' he thought; but Sipyagin anticipated him.

'You spoke to me, too, do you remember?' he said carelessly, interrupting himself to look at his cigar, and to jog his hat forwards on to his forehead, 'you spoke . . . eh? you spoke of . . . that friend of yours who has married my . . . relation. Do you see them? They are settled not far from here?'

'Aha!' thought Paklin, 'Sila, look out!'

'I have seen them only once, your Excellency! they are living, as a fact . . . at no great distance from here.'

'You understand, of course,' Sipyagin went on in the same manner, 'that I have no further serious interest, as I explained to you, either in that frivolous girl or in your friend. Good heavens! I've no prejudices, but you will agree with me, this is beyond everything. It's folly, you know. Though I imagine they have been more drawn together by political sympathies' ('Politics!' he repeated with a shrug of his shoulders) 'than by any other feeling.'

'Indeed I imagine so, your Excellency!'

'Yes, Mr. Nezhdanov was a red-hot republican. I must do him the justice to admit that he made no secret of his opinions.'

'Nezhdanov,' Paklin hazarded, 'has been led away, perhaps, but his heart——'

'Is good,' put in Sipyagin: 'to be sure . . . to be sure, like Markelov's. They all have good hearts. Probably he too has taken part —and will be too . . . We shall have to protect him too.'

Paklin clasped his hands before his breast.

'Ah, yes, yes, your Excellency! Extend your protection to him! Indeed . . . he deserves . . . deserves your sympathy.'

'H'm,' said Sipyagin; 'you think so?'

'If not for his own sake, at least . . . for your niece's; for his wife's! ('O Lord! O Lord!' Paklin was thinking, 'what lies I 'm telling!')

Sipyagin puckered up his eyes.

'You are, I see, a very devoted friend. That 's excellent; that 's very praiseworthy, young man. And so, you say, they 're living near here?'

'Yes, your Excellency; at a large establishment . . .' Paklin bit his tongue.

'Tut . . . tut-tut . . . at Solomin's! so they 're there! I was aware of that—indeed, I 'd been told so, I 'd been informed. . . . Yes.' (Mr. Sipyagin was not in the least aware of it, and no one had told him so; but recollecting Solomin's visit, and their midnight interview, he

dropped this bait. . . . And Paklin rose to it at once.)

'Since you know that,' he began, and a second time he bit his tongue. . . . But it was too late. . . . From the mere glance flung at him by Sipyagin he realised that he had been playing with him all the while, as a cat plays with a mouse.

'I must tell your Excellency, though,' the luckless wretch faltered, 'that I really know nothing. . . .'

'And I ask you no questions, upon my word! What do you mean? What do you take me, and yourself, for?' said Sipyagin haughtily, and he promptly withdrew into his ministerial heights.

And again Paklin felt himself a wretched little, entrapped creature. . . . Till that instant he kept his cigar in the corner of his mouth, remote from Sipyagin, and had stealthily puffed the smoke on one side; now he took it out of his mouth altogether, and ceased smoking.

'Good Lord!' he groaned inwardly—and the sweat trickled over his shoulders more plentifully than before. 'What have I done! I have betrayed everything and every one! . . . I've been fooled, bought with a good cigar! . . . I'm an informer . . . and what can be done to undo the harm now? Lord!'

There was nothing to be done. Sipyagin began to doze with the same dignified, solemn ministerial air, wrapped up in his camel's-hair cloak. . . . And before another quarter of an hour had passed, both the carriages stopped in front of the governor's house.

XXXV

THE governor of the town of S—— was one of those good-natured, careless, worldly generals, those generals endowed with an exquisitely well-washed white body, and an almost equally pure soul, those well-born, well-bred generals, kneaded, so to speak, of the most finely sifted flour, who, though they never lay themselves out to be 'shepherds of the people,' do nevertheless give proof of very tolerable administrative abilities; and doing very little work, for ever sighing for Petersburg and dangling after pretty provincial ladies, are of the most unmistakable service to their province and leave pleasant memories behind them. He had only just got out of bed, and, sitting in a silk dressing-gown and a loose night-shirt before his looking-glass, he was dabbing his face and neck with eau-de-cologne, after taking off a perfect collection of little amulets and relics as a preliminary,—when he was informed of the arrival of Sipyagin and Kallomyetsev on im-

portant and urgent business. With Sipyagin he was very intimate, called him by his Christian name, had known him from his youth up, was continually meeting him in Petersburg drawing-rooms, and of late he had begun, every time his name occurred to him, to ejaculate mentally a respectful 'Ah!' as on hearing the name of a future statesman. Kallomyetsev he knew rather less and respected much less, seeing that for some time past 'unpleasant' complaints had begun to be made against him; he regarded him, however, as a man—*qui fera chemin*—one way or another.

He gave orders that the visitors should be asked into his study, and promptly came into it in the same silk dressing-gown, and without even an apology for receiving them in such an unofficial attire; and he shook hands cordially with them. Only Sipyagin and Kallomyetsev had, however, been conducted to the governor's study; Paklin had been left in the drawing-room. As he crawled out of the coach, he had tried to sneak off, muttering that he had business at home; but Sipyagin with courteous firmness had detained him (Kallomyetsev had skipped up and whispered in Sipyagin's ear: '*Ne le lâchez pas! Tonnerre de tonnerre!*') and taken him in along with him. To the study, however, he had not led him, but had requested

him, still with the same courteous firmness, to wait in the drawing-room till he should be sent for. Paklin even here hoped to slink off . . . but, at a hint from Kallomyetsev, a stalwart gendarme showed himself at the door. . . . Paklin remained.

'You guess, no doubt, what has brought me to you, *Voldemar*?' began Sipyagin.

'No, dear boy, I can't guess,' answered the amiable epicurean, while a smile of welcome curved his rosy cheeks and showed a glimpse of his shining teeth, half hidden by silky moustaches. . . .

'What? ... Don't you know about Markelov?'

'What do you mean?—Markelov?' the governor repeated with the same expression. He had, to begin with, no clear recollection that the man arrested the day before was called Markelov; and he had besides utterly forgotten that Sipyagin's wife had a brother of that surname. 'But why are you standing, Boris? sit down; won't you have some tea?'

But Sipyagin was in no mood for tea.

When he explained at last what was the matter and for what reason he and Kallomyetsev had made their appearance, the governor uttered a pained exclamation, and slapped himself on the forehead, while his face assumed an expression of grief.

'Yes . . yes . . . yes!' he repeated; 'what a misfortune! And he's here now—to-day—for a while; you know we never keep *that sort* with us longer than one night; but the commander of police is out of the town, so your brother-in-law's been detained. . . . But to-morrow they will forward him. Dear me! how very unfortunate! How distressed your wife must be! What is it you wish?'

'I should have liked to have an interview with him, here—if it's not contrary to law.'

'My dear fellow! laws are not made for men like you. I *do* feel for you! . . . *C'est affreux, tu sais!*'

He gave a peculiar ring. An adjutant appeared.

'My dear baron, if you please—some arrangements here.' He told him what he wanted. The baron vanished. 'Only fancy, *mon cher ami*, you know they all but murdered him. They tied his hands behind him, clapped him in a cart, and off they went with him! And he—fancy! isn't in the least angry with them—not a bit indignant—dear, dear! He's so composed altogether. . . . I was astonished! but there, you will see for yourself. *C'est un fanatique tranquille.*'

'*Ce sont les pires*,' Kallomyetsev pronounced sententiously.

The governor gave him a dubious look.

'By the way, I must have a word with you, Semyon Petrovitch.'

'Why, what is it?'

'Oh, something's amiss.'

'And what?'

'Well, I must tell you; your debtor, that peasant who came to me with a complaint——'

'Well?'

'He's hanged himself, you know.'

'When?'

'It's of no consequence when: but it's a bad business.'

Kallomyetsev shrugged his shoulders, and with a dandified swing of his elegant person moved away to the window. At that instant the adjutant brought in Markelov.

The governor had spoken truly about him; he was unnaturally calm. Even his habitual moroseness had vanished from his face and was replaced by an expression of a sort of indifferent weariness. It did not change when he saw his brother-in-law, and only in the glance he flung at the German adjutant escorting him there was a momentary flash of his old hatred for that class of persons. His coat had been torn in two places and hurriedly sown up with coarse thread; on his forehead, over one eyebrow, and on the bridge of his nose could

be seen small scars covered with clotted blood. He had not washed, but had combed his hair. Stuffing both hands up to the wrists into his sleeves, he stood not far from the door. His breathing was quite even.

'Sergei Mihalovitch!' Sipyagin began in an agitated voice, going two steps towards him, and stretching out his right hand so that it might touch him or stop him if he were to make a forward movement. 'Sergei Mihalovitch! I am not here to express to you our amazement, our deep distress—that you cannot doubt! You have yourself *willed* your own ruin! And you have ruined yourself! But I desired to see you so as to say to you . . . er . . . er . . . to render . . . to give you the chance of hearing the voice of common sense, honour, and friendship! You may still mitigate your lot; and, believe me, I will, for my part, do all that lies in my power, and the honoured head of this province will support me in this.' Here Sipyagin raised his voice: 'Unfeigned penitence for your errors, and a full confession without reserve, which shall be duly represented in the proper quarters . . .'

Your Excellency,' Markelov began all at once, addressing the governor, and the very sound of his voice was quiet, though a little hoarse, 'I imagined it was your pleasure to

see me to make a further examination of me or something. . . . But if you have summoned me only at the desire of Mr. Sipyagin, give orders, please, for me to be taken back; we can't understand one another. All he says . . . is so much Greek to me.'

'Greek . . . indeed!' Kallomyetsev intervened in a haughty treble; 'but it's not Greek to you to set peasants rioting! That's not Greek, is it? Eh?'

'What have you here, your Excellency? some sub in the secret police, eh? So zealous in his work?' queried Markelov, and a faint smile of pleasure quivered on his pale lips.

Kallomyetsev, with a hiss of anger, was stamping. . . But the governor stopped him.

'It's your own fault, Semyon Petrovitch. Why do you interfere in what's not your business?'

'Not my business! . . . I should say it's the public business . . . of all us noblemen! . . .'

Markelov scanned Kallomyetsev with a cold, prolonged gaze, as though it were for the last time, and turned a little towards Sipyagin. 'And since you, brother-in-law, want me to explain my views to you, here you are. I recognise that the peasants had the right to arrest me and give me up if they didn't like what I said to them. They were free to do

that. *I* had come to them; not they to me. And the government, if it sends me to Siberia . . . I'm not going to grumble—though I don't regard myself as guilty. It's doing its own work, for it's guarding itself. Is that enough for you?'

Sipyagin flung up his hands.

'Enough! What a thing to say! That's not the question, and it's not for us to criticise the action of the government; what I want to know is, do you feel . . . do you, dear Sergei, feel'—(Sipyagin resolved to try an appeal to the feelings)—'the senselessness, the madness of your attempt? are you prepared to prove your *repentance* in act? and can I answer, to a certain extent answer, for you, Sergei?'

Markelov knitted his bushy brows.

'I have said my say . . . and I don't want to repeat it.'

'But repentance! What of your repentance?'

Suddenly Markelov grew restive.

'Ah, let me alone with your "repentance"! Do you want to crawl inside my soul? Leave that at least to me.'

Sipyagin shrugged his shoulders.

'There, you are always like that; you will never listen to the voice of reason! You have

still a possibility of extricating yourself without scandal or dishonour.'

'Without scandal or dishonour . . .' Markelov repeated grimly. 'We know those phrases! They are always used to suggest a man's doing something scoundrelly. That's what they mean!'

'We sympathise with you,' Sipyagin continued to exhort Markelov, 'and you hate us.'

'A nice sort of sympathy! You pack us off to Siberia to hard labour; that's how you show your sympathy for us! Ah, let me alone . . . let me alone, for mercy's sake!'

And Markelov's head sank on his breast. There was great confusion in his soul, quiet as he was outwardly. More than all he was fretted and tortured by the thought that he had been betrayed by none other than Eremey of Goloplyok! Eremey in whom he had believed so blindly! That Mendely, the Sulker, had not followed him had not really surprised him. . . . Mendely had been drunk and was frightened. But Eremey! To Markelov, Eremey was a sort of personification of the Russian peasantry. . . . And he had deceived him. Then, was all Markelov had been toiling for, was it all wrong, a mistake? And was Kislyakov a liar, and were Vassily Nikolaevitch's orders folly, and were all the articles and books, works

of socialists and thinkers, every letter of which had seemed to him something beyond doubt, beyond attack—was all that too rubbish? Could it be? And that splendid simile of the swollen abscess, ready for the stroke of the lancet, was that too a mere phrase? 'No! no!' he murmured to himself, and over his bronzed cheeks flitted a faint tinge of brickdust colour; 'no; it's all true; all . . . it is *I* am to blame, I didn't understand, I didn't say the right thing, I didn't go the right way to work! I ought simply to have given orders, and if any one had tried to hinder or resist, put a bullet through his head! what's the use of explanations here? Any one not with us has no right to live . . . spies are killed like dogs, worse than dogs!'

And all the details of his capture passed before Markelov's mind. . . . First the silence, the leers, the shouts at the back of the crowd. Then one fellow comes up sideways as if to salute him. Then that sudden rush! And how they had flung him down! . . . 'Lads . . . lads! . . . what are you about?' And they, 'Give us a belt here! Tie him!' . . . The shaking of his bones . . . and helpless wrath . . . and the stinking dust in his mouth, in his nostrils. . . . 'Toss him . . . toss him into the cart.' Some one guffawing thickly . . . ugh!

'I didn't go the right way—the right way to

work!' That was just what fretted and tormented him; that he himself had fallen under the wheel was his personal misfortune: it had no bearing on the cause in general; that he could bear . . . but Eremey! Eremey!

While Markelov stood, his head sunk on his breast, Sipyagin drew the governor aside and began talking to him in undertones, with slight gesticulations and a shake of two fingers on his forehead, as though he would suggest that the poor fellow was not quite right in that region, and would try altogether to arouse, if not sympathy, at least indulgence for the crazy creature. And the governor shrugged his shoulders, turned up and then half-closed his eyes, regretted his own helplessness in the matter, but gave some vague promises. . . . '*Tous les égards . . . certainement, tous les égards*,' . . . the delicately lisped words were heard softly uttered through his scented moustaches. . . . 'But you know, dear boy, the law!' 'Of course—the law!' Sipyagin assented with a sort of stoical submissiveness.

While they were conversing in this way in the corner, Kallomyetsev simply could not stand still; he moved up and down, cleared his throat, hummed and hawed, exhibiting every sign of impatience. At last he went up to Sipyagin, and hurriedly remarked: '*Vous oubliez l'autre!*'

'Ah, yes!' said Sipyagin aloud. '*Merci de me l'avoir rappelé.* I must lay the following fact before your Excellency,' he said, turning to the governor. . . . (He used this formal address to his dear Voldemar intentionally, not to compromise the prestige of authority before a revolutionist.) 'I have good grounds for supposing that my *beau-frère's* mad attempt has certain ramifications; and that one of those branches, that is, one of the suspected persons is at no great distance from this town. Send, he added, in an undertone, 'for the man . . . there, in your drawing-room. . . . I brought him with me.'

The governor glanced at Sipyagin, thought with reverence, 'What a fellow!' and gave the necessary order. A minute later, the 'servant of God,' Sila Paklin, stood before him.

Sila Paklin was beginning to make a low bow to the governor; but catching sight of Markelov he did not complete his salutation—he remained as he was, bent in half, twisting his cap about in his hands. Markelov cast a heedless glance in his direction, but can hardly have recognised him; for he sank again into thought.

'Is this—the branch?' queried the governor, pointing at Paklin with a large white finger adorned with a turquoise.

'Oh, no!' responded Sipyagin with a half-

smile. 'However,' he added, after a moment's thought, 'here, your Excellency,' he began again aloud, 'before you is one Mr. Paklin. He is, to the best of my belief, a resident in Petersburg, and an intimate friend of a certain person who filled the position of tutor in my family, and left my house, taking with him—I blush to add—a young girl, a relative of my own.'

'*Ah! oui, oui,*' muttered the governor, and he flung up his head; 'I had heard something . . . the Countess was telling me . . .'

Sipyagin raised his voice.

'That person is a certain Mr. Nezhdanov, strongly suspected by me of perverted ideas and theories . . .'

'*Un rouge à tous crins,*' put in Kallomyetsev.

'Of perverted ideas and theories,' repeated Sipyagin still more distinctly, 'and is certainly not without a share in all this propaganda; he is . . . in hiding, as I have been informed by Mr. Paklin, in the factory of the merchant Faleyev . . .'

At the words 'I have been informed,' Markelov glanced a second time at Paklin, but only smiled, slowly and indifferently.

'Excuse me, excuse me, your Excellency,' cried Paklin, 'and you, Mr. Sipyagin; I never . . . never. . . .'

'You say the merchant Faleyev?' said the governor, addressing Sipyagin, and merely twirling his fingers in Paklin's direction, as much as to say, 'Silence there, my good man.' 'What's coming to them, our respectable bearded shopkeepers? Yesterday they caught another one about the same business. You may have heard his name—Golushkin, a rich man. But there, he'll never make a revolution. He's grovelling on his knees now.'

'The merchant Faleyev does not come into the affair,' Sipyagin struck off; 'I know nothing of his views; I am speaking only of his factory, in which, according to Mr. Paklin's story, Mr. Nezhdanov may be found at this moment.'

'I didn't say so!' Paklin wailed again. 'It was *you* said so!'

'Excuse me, Mr. Paklin,' Sipyagin went on, uttering every word with the same relentless distinctness. 'I respect the sentiment of friendship which inspires your denial.' ('Why—he's a regular Guizot!' the governor was thinking to himself.) 'But I will venture to put myself before you as an example. Do you suppose the sentiment of kinship is less strong in me than your feeling of friendship? But there is another feeling, sir, which is stronger still, and which ought to be our guide in all our deeds and actions—the feeling of duty!

'*Le sentiment du devoir*,' Kallomyetsev explained.

Markelov scanned both the speakers.

'Mr. Governor,' he observed, 'I repeat my request: order me, if you please, to be removed from these chatterers.'

But here the governor lost patience a little.

'Mr. Markelov!' he exclaimed, 'I should advise you, in your position, to show more restraint in your language, and more respect for your superiors . . . especially when they are expressing patriotic sentiments such as you have just heard from the lips of your *beau-frère*. I shall be very happy, my dear Boris,' added the governor, turning to Sipyagin, 'to bring your noble action before the notice of the minister. But where precisely is this Mr. Nezhdanov to be found—in this factory?'

Sipyagin knit his brows.

'He is with a certain Mr. Solomin, the overseer of the machinery there—so this Mr. Paklin has informed me.'

It seemed to afford Sipyagin a peculiar satisfaction to torment poor Sila; he was making him pay now for the cigar he had given him in the carriage, and the familiarity of his behaviour, and even some little flattery wasted on him.

'And this Solomin,' put in Kallomyetsev, 'is an unmistakable radical and republican, and it

would be quite as well for your Excellency to turn your attention to him too.'

'Do you know these people . . . Solomin . . . and what's his name—Nezhdanov?' the governor questioned Markelov in a rather authoritative nasal.

Markelov's nostrils dilated vindictively.

'And do you, your Excellency, know Confucius and Livy?'

The governor turned away.

'*Il n'y a pas moyen de causer avec cet homme*,' he observed, shrugging his shoulders. 'Baron, here, please!'

The adjutant darted up to him; and Paklin, seizing the opportunity, limped hobbling up to Sipyagin.

'What are you doing?' he whispered; 'do you want to ruin your own niece? Why, she's with him, with Nezhdanov! . . .'

'I am ruining no one, sir,' Sipyagin responded aloud; 'I am obeying the dictates of my conscience, and ——'

'And your wife, my sister, who keeps you under her thumb?' Markelov put in quite as loudly.

Sipyagin, at the phrase, did not turn a hair. . . . It was too much beneath him!

'Listen,' Paklin continued, whispering—his whole body was shaking with excitement and

possibly with fear—and his eyes glittered with hate and the tears made a lump in his throat; tears of pity for *the others*, and anger with himself; 'listen, I told you she was married—that's not true—I told you a lie!—but this marriage must take place now—and if you prevent this, if the police make a raid on them, there will be a stain on your conscience which nothing can wipe off, and you——'

'The fact you have communicated,' Sipyagin interrupted still louder, 'if only it is true, which I have good reason to doubt, can only hasten the measure I should think it necessary to take; and as to the purity of my conscience, sir, I will ask you not to concern yourself about it.'

'It's polished, brother,' Markelov put in again; 'there's a coat of Petersburg varnish laid on it; nothing will touch it! Ah, Mr. Paklin, you may whisper as you will, you'll never whisper your way out of this business, no fear!'

The governor thought it needful to cut short these recriminations.

'I presume,' he began, 'that you have said all you need to, gentlemen; and so, my dear baron, you may remove Mr. Markelov. *N'est-ce pas*, Boris, you have no further need . . . ?'

Sipyagin made a deprecating gesture.

I have said all I could!'

'Very well. . . . My dear baron . . .'

The adjutant approached Markelov, clinked his spurs, made a horizontal motion with his arm. . . . 'If you please!' Markelov turned and went out. Paklin—only in imagination, it must be owned, but with bitter sympathy and pity—shook his hand.

'And we'll send our fellows to the factory,' pursued the governor. 'Only there's one thing, Boris; I fancy—this gentleman'—(he indicated Paklin with a turn of his chin)—'gave you some information about your young relation. . . . Possibly she is there, in the factory. . . . If so . . .'

'She could not be arrested in any case,' observed Sipyagin profoundly; 'possibly she will come to her senses and return. If you will permit it, I will write her a little note.'

'I shall be obliged if you will. And, of course, you may rest assured. . . . *Nous coffrerons le quidam . . . mais nous sommes galants avec les dames . . . et avec celle-là donc!*'

'But you are taking no measures with regard to that Solomin!' Kallomyetsev exclaimed, plaintively. He had been all the while on the alert trying to catch the governor's remarks a little aside to Sipyagin. 'I assure you, he's the ringleader! I've an instinct in these things . . . a perfect instinct!'

'*Pas trop de zèle*, dear Semyon Petrovitch, observed the governor with a smirk. 'Remember Talleyrand! If there's anything amiss, he won't escape us either. You'd much better devote your thoughts to your . . .' The governor made a gesture suggesting a noose round the neck. . . . 'And by the way,' he turned again to Sipyagin—'*et ce gaillard-là*' (he again indicated Paklin by a turn of his chin), '*qu'en ferons-nous?* He doesn't look formidable.'

'Let him go,' said Sipyagin softly, and he added in German: '*Lass den Lumpen laufen!*'

He imagined, for some unknown reason, that he was making a quotation from Goethe, from *Götz von Berlichingen.*

'You can go, sir!' observed the governor aloud. 'We have no further need of you! Good-bye, till we meet again.'

Paklin made a general bow and went out into the street, utterly crushed and humiliated. Good God! this contempt annihilated him!

'What am I?' he thought in unutterable despair; 'both coward and informer? Oh, no . . . no; I'm an honest man, gentlemen, and I'm not quite devoid of all manliness!'

But what was this familiar figure standing on the steps of the governor's house, gazing at him with dejected eyes, full of reproach? Why,

it was Markelov's old servant. He had, seemingly, come to the town after his master, and would not move away from his prison. . . . But why did he look like that at Paklin? It was not he who had betrayed Markelov!

'And what induced me to go poking my nose where I was no manner of use?' he thought again in desperation. 'Why couldn't I have kept quiet and minded my own business? And now they'll talk, and most likely write: "A certain Mr. Paklin has told of everything, he has betrayed them . . . his friends, betrayed them to the enemy!"' He recalled at this point the glance Markelov had flung at him, he recalled his last words: 'You'll never whisper your way out, no fear!'—and then those aged, dejected, despairing eyes! And as it is written in the scriptures, 'he wept bitterly,' and made his way to the oasis, to Fomushka and Fimushka, to Snanduliya. . . .

XXXVI

WHEN Marianna, the same morning, came out of her room, she saw Nezhdanov dressed and sitting on the sofa. In one hand he held his head, the other lay weak and motionless on his knees. She went up to him.

'Good morning, Alexey. . . . You've not undressed? you've not slept? How pale you are!'

His heavy eyelids rose slowly.

'No, I didn't undress, I've not been asleep.'

'Are you ill, or is it the result of yesterday?'

Nezhdanov shook his head.

'I couldn't sleep after Solomin went into your room.'

'When?'

'Yesterday evening.'

'Alexey, are you jealous? Well, that's something new! And what a time you've chosen to be jealous! He only stayed with me a quarter of an hour. . . . And we were talking about his cousin, the priest, and how to arrange our marriage.'

'I know he only stayed a quarter of an hour; I saw when he came out. And I 'm not jealous, oh, no! But still, I couldn't get to sleep, after that.'

'Why?'

Nezhdanov did not speak.

'I kept thinking . . . thinking . . . thinking!'

'What about?'

'You . . . and him . . . and myself.'

'And what conclusion did you come to?'

'Must I tell you, Marianna?'

'Yes, tell me.'

'I thought that I 'm in your way . . . and his . . . and my own.'

'Mine? his? I can fancy what you mean by that, though you do declare you 're not jealous. But your own?'

'Marianna, there are two men in me, and one won't let the other live. So that I suppose in fact it would be better for both to cease to live.'

'Come, hush, Alexey, please! What makes you want to torture yourself and me? We ought to be considering now what steps we must take. . . . They won't leave us in peace, you know.'

Nezhdanov took her hand affectionately.

'Sit beside me, Marianna, and let us talk a little, like friends. While there is still time.

Give me your hand. I think it would be as well for us to explain ourselves, though, they do say, explanations of all sorts only lead to greater confusion. But you are kind and wise; you will understand it all, and what I don't say out, you will think for yourself. Sit down.'

Nezhdanov's voice was very soft, and a peculiar affectionate tenderness was apparent in his eyes, which were fixed intently on Marianna.

She sat down readily at once beside him and took his hand.

'Thank you, dear one. Now listen. I won't keep you long. I've gone over all I want to say, in my head, during the night. Well, don't think that what happened yesterday has upset me unduly; I was certainly very ridiculous and even a little disgusting; but you thought nothing base or low of me, I know . . . you know me. I said that what happened hasn't upset me; that's not true, it's nonsense . . . it has upset me, not because I was brought home drunk, but because it has been the final proof to me of my failure! And not only because I can't drink as Russians drink, but in everything! everything! Marianna, I'm bound to tell you that I have no faith now in the cause which brought us together; for which we left that house together; to tell the truth,

I had grown lukewarm when your enthusiasm warmed me and set me on fire again. I don't believe in it! I don't believe in it!'

He laid the hand that was free over his eyes and was silent for an instant. Marianna too uttered not a word and looked down. . . . She felt that he had told her nothing new.

'I used to think,' Nezhdanov went on, taking his hand away from his eyes, but not looking again at Marianna, 'that I did believe in the cause itself, and only doubted of myself, my own power, my own fitness; my abilities, I thought, do not correspond with my convictions. . . . But it seems these two things can't be separated, and what's the object of deceiving oneself? No, I don't believe in the *cause itself.* And you do believe in it, Marianna?'

Marianna sat up and raised her head.

'Yes, Alexey, I do believe in it. I believe in it with all the strength of my soul, and I will devote all my life to this cause! To my last breath!'

Nezhdanov turned towards her and scanned her from head to foot in a touched and envious glance.

'Yes, yes; I expected that answer. So you see that there is nothing for us to do in common; you have severed our tie yourself at one blow.'

Marianna did not speak.

'Now Solomin,' began Nezhdanov again 'though he does not believe . . .'

'What?'

'No! He does not believe . . . but he does not need to; he moves calmly forward. A man going along a road to a town doesn't ask himself whether the town has a real existence. He goes on and on. That's like Solomin. And nothing more's needed. But I . . . can't go forward; I don't want to go back; standing still I 'm sick of. Whom could I presume to ask to be my companion? You know the proverb, "One at each end of the pole and the burden is borne easily"; but if one cannot hold up his end, what becomes of the other?'

'Alexey,' Marianna ventured uncertainly, 'I think you are exaggerating. We love one another, don't we?'

Nezhdanov gave a heavy sigh.

'Marianna . . . I revere you . . . and you pity me, and each of us trusts implicitly in the other's honesty; that's the real truth! But there's no love between us.'

'Stop, Alexey, what are you saying? Why, this very day, directly, there will be a search for us. . . . We must set off together, you know, and not part. . . .'

'Yes; and go to the priest Zosim to get him to marry us, as Solomin proposes. I know very well that in your eyes this marriage is nothing but a passport; a means of avoiding annoyance from the police . . . but, nevertheless, it does in a way pledge us . . . to life in common, side by side . . . or if it does not *pledge* us, at least it presupposes a desire to live together.'

'What do you mean, Alexey? Are you going to stay here?'

'Yes,' all but broke from Nezhdanov's lips, but he recollected himself and said:

'N . . . n . . . no.'

'Then you are going away from here, but not where I go?'

Nezhdanov warmly pressed the hand which still lay in his.

'To leave you without a protector, without a champion, would be a crime, and I won't do that, mean as I may be. You shall have a champion. . . . Do not doubt it!'

Marianna bent down towards Nezhdanov, and, putting her face close to his, tried anxiously to look into his eyes, into his soul—into his very soul.

'What is the matter with you, Alexey? What is in your heart? Tell me! . . . You frighten me. Your words are so enigmatical,

so strange. . . . And your face! I have never seen you with such a face!'

Nezhdanov gently turned her away, and gently kissed her hand. This time she did not resist, and did not laugh, and still looked at him with anxiety and alarm.

'Don't alarm yourself, please! There's nothing strange in it. The whole trouble is this: Markelov, they say, was beaten by the peasants; he felt their fists, they bruised his ribs. . . . I've not been beaten by the peasants—they even drank with me, drank my health . . . but they have bruised my soul worse than Markelov's ribs. I was born all out of joint. . . . I tried to set myself right, but only put myself more out of joint than ever. That's just what you see in my face.'

'Alexey,' said Marianna slowly, 'it would be very wrong of you not to be open with me.' He clasped her hands.

'Marianna, my whole being is before you, as it were in your hand; and whatever I do, I tell you beforehand, you will be surprised at nothing, nothing in reality!'

Marianna wanted to ask for an explanation of those words, but she did not ask for it . . . besides, at that instant Solomin came into the room.

His movements were sharper and more rapid

than usual. His eyes were screwed up, his wide lips were drawn tight, his whole face looked as it were sharper, and wore a dry, hard, almost surly expression.

'My friends,' he began, 'I 've come to tell you that delay 's out of the question. Get ready. . . . It 's time for you to go. You must be ready within an hour. You must go to your wedding. There 's no news whatever from Paklin; his horses were first kept at Arzhano and then sent back. . . . He remained there. Probably they took him to the town. He wouldn't tell tales, of course, but there 's no knowing, he might let something out, perhaps. Besides, they might find out from the horses. My cousin has been told to expect you. Pavel will go with you. He will be the witness.'

'And you, Solomin . . . Vassily?' asked Nezhdanov. 'Aren't you coming? I see you 're dressed for a journey,' he added, glancing at the high boots Solomin was wearing.

'Oh, I put them on . . . it 's muddy out of doors.'

'But aren't you going to answer for us, Vassily?'

'I don't suppose . . . any way, that 's my affair. So in an hour 's time. Marianna, Tatyana wants to see you. She has been preparing something out there.'

Oh, yes! And I was meaning to go to her....

Marianna was moving to the door. . . .

Something strange, something akin to terror, misery, came out on Nezhdanov's face. . . .

'Marianna, are you going away, dear?' he said suddenly in a failing voice.

She stopped.

'I 'll be back in half an hour. It won't take me long to pack.'

'Yes; but come to me. . . .'

'Certainly, what for?'

'I wanted to have one more look at you.' He took a long, slow look at her. 'Good-bye, good-bye, Marianna!'

She was bewildered. 'Why . . . what on earth am I talking about? I 'm talking rubbish. Why, you 'll be back in half an hour, won't you? Eh?'

'Of course.'

'To be sure. . . . Forgive me. My head 's reeling from want of sleep. I too will . . . pack up directly.'

Marianna went out of the room. Solomin was about to follow her.

Nezhdanov stopped him.

'Vassily!'

'Well?'

'Give me your hand. I have to thank you, dear friend, for your hospitality.'

Solomin laughed.

'What an idea!' However, he gave him his hand.

'And something more,' Nezhdanov went on: 'if anything happens to me, may I rely on you, Vassily, not to leave Marianna?'

'Your wife that is to be?'

'Yes, Marianna!'

'To begin with, I 'm sure nothing will happen to you; but you can set your mind at rest: Marianna is as precious to me as she is to you.'

'Oh! I know that . . . I know that! That 's right, then. Thanks. In an hour, then?'

'Yes.'

'I will be ready. Good-bye!'

Solomin went out and overtook Marianna on the stairs. He had it in his mind to say something to her about Nezhdanov, but he was silent. And Marianna on her side was aware that Solomin had it in his mind to speak to her, and about Nezhdanov too, and that he was silent. And she was silent too.

XXXVII

DIRECTLY Solomin went out, Nezhdanov jumped up from the sofa, walked twice from one corner to the other, then stood still for a minute in a sort of petrified stupefaction in the middle of the room; suddenly he shook himself, hurriedly flung off his 'masquerading' get-up, kicked it into a corner, took out and put on his own former attire. Then he went up to the three-legged table, took out of the drawer two sealed envelopes and another small article, which he thrust into his pocket; the envelopes he left on the table. Then he crouched down before the stove, and opened the little door. . . In the stove lay a whole heap of ashes. This was all that was left of Nezhdanov's manuscripts, of his book of verse. . . . He had burned it all during the night. But there in the stove, on one side, sticking close against one wall, was Marianna's portrait, given him by Markelov. It seemed he had not had the heart to burn the portrait too! Nezhdanov took it carefully out

and laid it on the table beside the sealed envelopes. Then with a resolute gesture he clutched his cap and was making for the door . . . but he stopped short, turned back, and went into Marianna's room. There he stood a minute, looked round him, and, approaching her little narrow bed, bent down, and with one stifled sob pressed his lips, not to the pillow, but to the foot of the bed. . . . Then he got up at once, and, pulling his cap over his eyes, rushed out.

Meeting no one, either in the corridor, on the stairs, or below, Nezhdanov slipped out into the little enclosure. It was a grey day with a low-hanging sky, and a damp breeze that stirred the tops of the grasses and set the leaves on the trees shaking; the factory made less rattle and roar than at the same time on other days; from its yard came a smell of coal, tar, and tallow. Nezhdanov took a sharp, searching look round, and went straight up to the old apple-tree which had attracted his attention on the very day of his arrival, when he had first looked out of the window of his little room. The stem of this apple-tree was overgrown with dry moss; its rugged, bare branches, with reddish-green leaves hanging here and there upon them, rose crooked into the air, like old bent arms raised in supplication. Nezhdanov stood with firm tread on the dark earth about its roots, and took out

of his pocket the small object that he had found in the table drawer. Then he looked attentively at the windows of the little lodge. . . . 'If any one catches sight of me this minute,' he thought, 'then, perhaps, I will put it off.' . . . But nowhere was there a sign of one human face . . . everything seemed dead, everything had turned away from him, gone for ever, left him to the mercy of fate. Only the factory thickly roared and hummed, and overhead fine keen drops of chilly rain began falling.

Then Nezhdanov, glancing through the crooked branches of the tree under which he was standing, at the low, grey, callously blind, damp sky, yawned, shrugged, thought, 'There 's nothing else left—I 'm not going back to Petersburg, to prison,' flung away his cap, and feeling already all over a sort of mawkish, heavy, overpowering languor, he put the revolver to his breast, pulled the trigger. . . .

Something seemed to strike him at once, not very violently even . . . but he was lying on his back, trying to understand what had happened to him, and how he had just seen Tatyana. . . . He even tried to call her, to say, 'Ah, I don't want . . .' but now he was numb all over, and there was a whirl of muddy green turning round and round over his face, in his eyes, on his head, in the marrow of his bones—and a sort

of terrible flat weight seemed crushing him for ever to the earth.

Nezhdanov had really caught a glimpse of Tatyana at the very minute when he pulled the trigger of the revolver. She had gone up to one of the windows, and had caught sight of him under the apple-tree. She had hardly time to think, 'Whatever is he doing in this rain under the apple-tree without a hat on?' when he rolled over on his back like a sheaf of corn. She did not hear the shot—the report was very faint—but she at once saw something was wrong, and rushed in hot haste down into the garden. . . . She ran up to Nezhdanov. . . . 'Alexey Dmitritch, what's the matter?' But already darkness had overtaken him. Tatyana bent over him, saw blood.

'Pavel!' she cried in a voice not her own—'Pavel!'

In a few instants, Marianna, Solomin, Pavel, and two of the factory-hands were in the enclosure. They lifted Nezhdanov up at once, carried him into the lodge, and laid him on the very sofa on which he had spent his last night.

He lay on his back with half-closed, fixed eyes, and face fast turning grey. He gave slow, heavy gasps, sometimes with a sob, as though he were choking. Life had not yet left him.

Marianna and Solomin were standing one on each side of the sofa, both almost as pale as Nezhdanov himself. Shaken, agitated, stunned, they were both—especially Marianna—but not astounded. 'How was it we did not foresee this?' they were thinking, and at the same time it seemed to them that they had . . . yes, they had foreseen it. When he had said to Marianna, 'Whatever I do, I tell you beforehand, nothing will come as a surprise to you,' and again when he had talked of the two men within him who could not live together, had not something stirred within her akin to a vague presentiment? Why had she not stopped at once and pondered on those words, on that presentiment? Why was it she did not dare now to look at Solomin, as though he were her accomplice . . . as though he too were feeling a sting of conscience? Why was it she was feeling, not only boundless, despairing pity for Nezhdanov, but a sort of horror and dread and shame? Could it be, it had rested with her to save him? Why was it they had neither dared utter a word? Scarcely dared breathe—and waited . . . for what? Merciful God!

Solomin sent for a doctor, though of course there was no hope. On the small wound, now black and bloodless, Tatyana laid a large sponge of cold water; she moistened his hair too with

cold water and vinegar. All at once Nezhdanov ceased gasping and stirred a little.

'He is coming to himself,' whispered Solomin.

Marianna was on her knees near the sofa. . . .

Nezhdanov glanced at her . . . up till then his eyes had had the fixed look of the dying.

'Oh, I 'm . . . still alive,' he articulated, scarcely audibly. 'Failed again . . . I 'm keeping you.'

'Alyosha!' moaned Marianna.

'Oh, yes . . . directly. . . . You remember, Marianna, in my . . . poem . . . "With flowers then deck me . . ." where are the flowers? But you 're here instead. . . . There, in my letter. . . .'

He suddenly shivered all over.

'Ah, here she is. . . . Give each other . . . both . . . your hands—before me. . . . Quick . . . take . . .'

Solomin grasped Marianna's hand. Her head lay on the sofa, face downwards, close to the wound.

Solomin stood stern and upright, looking dark as night.

'Yes . . . good . . . yes . . .'

Nezhdanov began to sob again, but in a strange, unusual way. . . . His breast rose, his sides heaved. . . .

He obviously was trying to lay his hand on

their clasped hands, but his hands were dead already.

'He is passing,' murmured Tatyana, who stood in the doorway, and she began crossing herself.

The sobbing gasps grew briefer, fewer. . . . He still sought Marianna with his eyes . . . but a sort of menacing, glassy whiteness was overspreading them. . . .

'Good . . .' was his last word.

He was no more . . . and the linked hands of Solomin and Marianna still lay on his breast.

This was what he had written in the two short letters he left. One was addressed to Silin, and consisted of only a few lines:

'Good-bye, brother, friend, good-bye! By the time you get this scrap of paper, I shall be dead. Don't ask how and why, and don't grieve; believe that I 'm better off now. Take our immortal Pushkin and read the description of the death of Lensky in *Yevgeny Onyegin*. Do you remember?—"The windows are white-washed; the mistress has gone. . . ." That 's all. It 's no good my talking to you . . . because I should have too much to say, and there 's no time to say it. But I could not go away without telling you; or you would have thought of me as living still, and I should be

wronging our friendship. Good-bye; live. Your friend.—A. N.'

The other letter was somewhat longer. It was addressed to Solomin and Marianna. This was what it contained: 'My children!' (Immediately after these words there was a break; something had been erased, or rather smudged over as though tears had fallen on it.) 'You will think it strange, perhaps, that I address you in this way. I am almost a child myself, and you, Solomin, are older of course than I am. But I am dying, and standing at the end of life I regard myself as an old man. I am much to blame to both of you, especially you, Marianna, for causing you such grief (I know, Marianna, you will grieve) and having given you so much anxiety. But what could I do? I could find no other way out of it. I could not *simplify myself*; the only thing left was to blot myself out altogether. Marianna, I should have been a burden to myself and to you. You are great-hearted, you would have rejoiced in the burden, as another sacrifice . . . but I had no right to take such a sacrifice from you; you have better and greater work to do. My children, let me unite you, as it were, from the grave. . . . You will be happy together. Marianna, you will infallibly

come to love Solomin; as for him . . . he has loved you ever since he first set eyes on you at the Sipyagins. That was no secret to me though we did run away together a few days after. Ah, that morning! How glorious it was, how sweet and young! It comes to me now as a token, as a symbol of your life together—yours and his—and I was merely by accident in his place that day. But it 's time to make an end; I don't want to work on your feelir gs. . . . I only want to justify myself. To-morrow you will have some very sorrowful moments. . . . But there 's no help for it! There 's no other way, is there? Good-bye, Marianna, my good, true girl! Good-bye, Solomin! I leave her in your care. Live happily—live to the good of others; and you, Marianna, think of me only when you are happy. Think of me as a man who was true and good too, but one for whom it was somehow more fitting to die than to live. Whether I really loved you, I don't know, my dear; but ' know that I have never felt a feeling stronger, and that it would have been more terrible to me to die without that feeling to carry with me to the grave.

'Marianna! if you ever meet a girl called Mashurina—Solomin knows her, I fancy—by the way, you have seen her too—tell her I thought

of her with gratitude not long before my death. . . . She will understand.

'But I must tear myself away. I looked out of window just now; among the rapidly moving clouds there was one lovely star. However rapidly they moved, they had not been able to hide it. That star made me think of you, Marianna. At this instant you are sleeping in the next room, and suspecting nothing. . . . I went to your door, listened, and I fancied I caught your pure, calm breathing. . . . Good-bye, good-bye, my dear! good-bye, my children, my friends!—Your A.

'Fie! fie! How came I, in a last letter before death, to say nothing of our great cause? I suppose because one can't tell lies on the point of death. . . . Marianna, forgive me this postscript. . . . The falsehood's in me, not in what you have faith in!

'Oh! something more: you will think, perhaps, Marianna, "He was afraid of the prison where they would certainly have put him, and he thought of *this* expedient to escape it." No; imprisonment's nothing of any consequence; but to be in prison for a cause you don't believe in—that's really senseless. And I am putting an end to myself, not from dread of being in prison. Good-bye, Marianna! Good-bye, my pure, spotless girl!'

Marianna and Solomin read this letter in turn. After that she put her portrait and the two letters in her pocket, and stood motionless.

Then Solomin said to her:

'Everything is ready, Marianna; let us go. We must carry out his wishes.'

Marianna approached Nezhdanov, touched his chill brow with her lips, and turning to Solomin said, 'Let us go.'

He took her by the hand, and together they went out of the room.

When a few hours later the police made a descent on the factory, they found of course Nezhdanov—but a corpse. Tatyana had laid the body out decorously, put a white pillow under his head, crossed his arms, and even put a nosegay of flowers on the little table beside him. Pavel, who was primed with all needful instructions, received the police-officers with the profoundest obsequiousness and a sort of derision, so that the latter hardly knew whether to thank him or to arrest him too. He described circumstantially how the suicide had taken place, and regaled them with Gruyère cheese and Madeira; but professed perfect ignorance of the whereabouts at the moment of Vassily Fedotitch and the lady who had been staying there, and confined himself to

assuring them that Vassily Fedotitch was never away long, on account of his work; that he 'd be back to-day, or else to-morrow, and he would then, without losing a minute, give notice of the fact. He was the man for that —accurate!

So the worthy police-officers went away with nothing, leaving a guard in charge of the body and promising to send the coroner.

XXXVIII

Two days after all these events, there drove into the courtyard of the 'accommodating' priest Zosim a little cart in which sat a man and a woman, already well known to the reader, and the day after their arrival they were legally married. Soon afterwards they disappeared, and the worthy Zosim never regretted what he had done. At the factory Solomin had left a letter addressed to the owner and delivered to him by Pavel; in it was given a full and exact account of the state of the business (it was doing splendidly), and a request was made for three months' leave of absence. This letter had been written two days before Nezhdanov's death, from which it may be concluded that Solomin even then thought it necessary to go away with him and Marianna and keep out of sight for a time. Nothing was revealed by the inquiry held over the suicide. The body was buried; Sipyagin cut short all further search for his niece.

Nine months later Markelov was tried. At the trial he behaved himself just as he had done before the governor, with composure, a certain dignity, and some weariness. His habitual sharpness was softened, but not by cowardice; there was another, nobler feeling at work. He made no defence, expressed no regret, blamed no one and mentioned no names; his emaciated face with its lustreless eyes preserved one expression—submission to his fate, and firmness; his mild but direct and truthful answers awakened in his very judges a sentiment akin to sympathy. Even the peasants who had seized him and gave witness against him—even they shared this feeling, and spoke of him as a 'simple,' good-hearted gentleman. But his guilt was too apparent; he could not possibly escape punishment, and it seemed as though he himself accepted this punishment as his due. Of his fellow-conspirators, few enough, Mashurina kept out of sight; Ostrodumov was killed by a shopkeeper whom he was inciting to revolt, and who gave him an 'awkward' blow; Golushkin, in consideration of his 'heartfelt penitence' (he almost went out of his senses with alarm and agitation), received a light sentence; Kislyakov was kept a month under arrest and then set free, and even allowed to 'gallop' about the provinces un-

checked; Nezhdanov was set free by death; Solomin, through lack of evidence, was left undisturbed though under suspicion. (He did not, however, avoid trial, and made his appearance when wanted.) Of Marianna nothing ever was said; and Paklin completely evaded all difficulties—indeed, no notice was taken of him at all.

A year and a half had gone by, the winter of 1870 had come. In Petersburg—Petersburg where the privy councillor and chamberlain Sipyagin was beginning to take an important position, where his wife patronised the arts, gave musical evenings, and founded soup-kitchens, and where Mr. Kallomyetsev was regarded as one of the most promising secretaries of his department—along one of the streets of Vassily Ostrov walked, hobbling and limping, a little man in a shabby overcoat with a catskin collar. It was Paklin. He had changed a good deal of late; a few silver threads could be seen among the long tufts of hair that stuck out below his fur cap. There chanced to be coming towards him along the pavement a rather stout, tall lady, closely muffled in a thick cloth cloak. Paklin cast an indifferent glance in her direction, passed her by . . . then suddenly stood still, thought a minute, flung up his arms, and

quickly turning and overtaking her, he looked up under her hat at her face.

'Mashurina?' he said in a low voice.

The lady scanned him majestically, and without uttering a word walked on.

'Dear Mashurina, I recognise you,' Paklin went on, hobbling along beside her, 'only don't you, please, be afraid. I wouldn't betray you, I am too delighted to have met you! I'm Paklin, Sila Paklin, you know, Nezhdanov's friend. . . . Come and see me; I live only a step or two away. Please do!'

'*Io sono contessa Rocca di Santo Fiume!*' the lady answered in a low voice, but in a wonderfully pure Russian accent.

'Come, nonsense! . . . a fine contessa! . . . Come and see me. Let us have a chat. . . .'

'But where do you live?' the Italian countess asked suddenly in Russian. 'I've no time to lose.'

'I live here, in this street—that's my house, the grey one there, with three stories. How kind it is of you not to persist in trying to mystify me! Give me your hand, come along. Have you been here long? And how are you a countess? Have you married some Italian count?'

Mashurina had not married an Italian count. She had been provided with a passport made

out in the name of a certain Countess Rocca di Santo Fiume, who had died not long before, and with this she had with the utmost composure returned to Russia, though she did not know a word of Italian and had the most Russian of faces.

Paklin conducted her to his humble lodgings. The hunchbacked sister with whom he was living came to meet the visitor from behind the screen that separated the tiny kitchen from the equally tiny passage.

'Here, Snapotchka,' he said, 'I commend to you a great friend of mine; give us some tea as quick as you can.'

Mashurina, who would not have gone to Paklin's if he had not mentioned Nezhdanov's name, took off her hat, and, passing her masculine hand over her still cropped hair, bowed and sat down in silence. She was altogether unchanged, she was even wearing the very same dress that she had worn two years before; but in her eyes there was a sort of immovable grief, which added something touching to the habitually stern expression of her face.

Snanduliya went for the samovar, while Paklin placed himself opposite Mashurina, lightly patted her on the knee, and hung down his head; but when he tried to speak, he was obliged to clear his throat; his voice broke

and tears glistened in his eyes. Mashurina sat stiff and motionless, without leaning back, in her chair, and looked morosely away.

'Yes, yes,' began Paklin, 'those were times! Looking at you, I remember . . . many things, and many people, dead and living; my poll parrots too are dead . . . but you didn't know them, I fancy; and both on the same day, as I foretold. Nezhdanov . . . poor Nezhdanov! . . . you know, of course . . .?'

'Yes, I know,' said Mashurina, still looking away.

'And do you know about Ostrodumov, too?' Mashurina merely nodded. She wanted him to go on talking of Nezhdanov, but she could not bring herself to ask him about him. He understood her without that.

'I was told that in the letter he left he mentioned you—was that true?'

Mashurina could not answer at once.

'It is true,' she brought out at last.

'He was a marvellous fellow! Only, he got out of his right track! He was about as good a revolutionist as I was. Do you know what he really was? The idealist of realism! Do you understand me?'

Mashurina flung a rapid glance at Paklin. She did not understand, and indeed she did not care to take the trouble to understand him.

It struck her as strange and unsuitable that he should dare to compare himself with Nezhdanov; but she thought, 'Let him brag now. (Though he was not bragging at all, but rather, to his own ideas, humbling himself.)

'A fellow called Silin found me out here,' Paklin continued. 'Nezhdanov had written to him too just before his death. And he, this Silin, was inquiring whether one couldn't get hold of any of his papers. But Alyosha's things had been put under seal . . . and besides, there were no papers among them; he burned everything, he burned his poems too. You didn't know perhaps that he wrote poetry? I am so sorry about them; I am sure some of them must have been very good. All that has vanished with him, all lost in the common vortex, and dead for ever! Nothing 's left but the memories of his friends till they pass away in their turn!'

Paklin paused.

'The Sipyagins,' he went on again: 'do you remember those condescending, dignified, loathsome swells? They 're at the tip-top of power and glory by now!'

Mashurina did not 'remember' the Sipyagins in the least; but Paklin hated them both, especially Mr. Sipyagin, to such a degree that he could not deny himself the pleasure of

'pulling them to pieces.' 'They say there's such a high tone in their house! they're always talking about virtue! But I've observed, whenever there's too much talk about virtue, it's for all the world like too much smell of scent in a sickroom; you may be sure there's some hidden nastiness to conceal! It's a suspicious sign! Poor Alexey! they were the ruin of him, those Sipyagins!'

'How's Solomin doing?' asked Mashurina. She had suddenly ceased to feel any inclination to hear anything about *him* from this man.

'Solomin!' cried Paklin. 'That's a first-rate fellow. He has got on splendidly. He threw up his old factory and carried off the best workmen with him. There was one chap there . . . a regular firebrand, they say! Pavel was his name . . . he took him along with him. Now they say he has a factory of his own, a small one, somewhere out Perm way, on co-operative principles. He's a man that'll stick to what he's about! He'll carry anything through! He's a sharp fellow, ay, and a strong one too. He's first-rate! And the great thing is: he's not trying to cure all the social diseases all in a minute. For we Russians are a queer lot, you know, we expect everything; some one or something is to come along one day and cure us all at once, heal all our

wounds, extract all our diseases like an aching tooth What or what this panacea is to be—why, Darwinism, the village commune, Arhip Perepentyev, a foreign war, anything you please! Only, we must have our teeth pulled out for us! It's all sluggishness, apathy, shallow thinking! But Solomin's not like that—no, he's not a quack doctor, he's first-rate!'

Mashurina waved her hand as though she would say, 'He may be dismissed, then.'

'Well, and that girl,' she inquired—'I've forgotten her name—who ran away with him, with Nezhdanov?'

'Marianna? Oh, she's that same Solomin's wife now. It's more than a year since she was married to him. At first it was only formal, but now they say she really is his wife. Yes, yes.'

Marianna waved her hand again. Once she had been jealous of Marianna for Nezhdanov's sake; now she felt indignant with her for being capable of infidelity to his memory. 'I dare say there's a baby by now,' she commented contemptuously.

'Very likely, I don't know. But where are you off to?' Paklin added, seeing that she was taking up her hat. 'Stay a little, Snapotchka will give us some tea directly.' It was not so much that he wanted to keep Mashurina par-

ticularly, as that he could not let slip an opportunity of giving utterance to all that had accumulated and was seething in his breast. Since Paklin had returned to Petersburg, he had seen very few people, especially of the younger generation. The Nezhdanov affair had scared him; he had grown very cautious and avoided society, and the younger men on their side looked very suspiciously upon him. One young man had even abused him to his face as an informer. With the elder generation he did not much care himself to consort; so that it had sometimes been his lot to be silent for weeks together. He did not speak out freely before his sister—not that he supposed her to be incapable of understanding him, oh no! He had the highest opinion of her intellect. . . . But with her he would have had to talk seriously and perfectly truthfully; directly he fell into 'playing trumps,' as they say, she would begin gazing at him with a peculiar intent and compassionate look; and he was ashamed. And how is a man to get on without a little 'trumping,' just a low 'trump' occasionally! And so life in Petersburg had begun to be a weariness of the flesh to Paklin, and he even thought about moving elsewhere, to Moscow perhaps. Reflections of all sorts, speculations, fancies, epigrams, and sarcasms,

were stored up within him, like water in a closed mill. . . . The floodgates could not be raised; the water had grown stagnant and stale. Mashurina had turned up . . . so he lifted the floodgates and talked and talked. . . . He fell upon Petersburg, Petersburg life, and all Russia. No one and nothing was spared. Mashurina took a very limited interest in all this, but she did not contradict or interrupt him . . . and that was all he wanted.

'Yes, indeed,' he said, 'these are nice little times, I can assure you! In society the stagnation 's absolute; every one bored to perdition! In literature a vacuum clean swept! In criticism . . . if an advanced young reviewer has to say that "it 's characteristic of the hen to lay eggs," it takes him twenty whole pages to expound this mighty truth, and even then he doesn't quite manage it! They 're as soft, these fellows, let me tell you, as feather-beds, as greasy as cold stew, and foaming at the mouth they utter commonplaces! In science . . . ha! ha! ha! we 've a renowned *Kant* of our own indeed, if it 's only the *Kant'* (*i.e.* braiding) 'on our engineers' collars! In art it 's just the same! If you care to go to the concert to-day, you will hear the national singer Agremantsky. . . . He is having an immense success. . . . And if a stuffed bream, a *stuffed bream*, I tell you, were possessed

of a voice, it would sing precisely like that worthy! And Skoropihin even—you know our time-honoured Aristarchus—praises him! It's something, he declares, quite unlike Western art! He praises our miserable painters too! He used once to rave, he says, over Europe, over the Italians; but he has heard Rossini and thought: "Pooh, pooh!" he has seen Raphael—"Pooh, pooh!" And that "pooh" is quite enough for our young men; they repeat "pooh" after Skoropihin, and they 're contented if you please! And meanwhile the people's poverty is fearful, they are utterly crushed by taxes, and the only reform that's been accomplished is that all peasants have taken to caps while their wives have given up coifs. . . . And the famine! The drunkenness! The usurers!'

But at this point Mashurina yawned, and Paklin saw he must change the subject.

'You have not yet told me,' he said to her, 'where you have been these two years, and whether you have been here long, and what you have been doing and how you came to be transformed into an Italian, and why——'

'There's no need for you to know all that,' Mashurina interrupted; 'what's the use? That's not in your line now.'

Paklin felt a pang, and to hide his confusion he laughed a short, forced little laugh.

'Well, that's as you please,' he rejoined. 'I know I'm regarded as out-of-date by the present generation; and to be sure, I can't reckon myself . . . among the ranks of those who . . .' He did not complete his sentence. 'Here is Snapotchka bringing us some tea. You must take a cup, and listen to me. . . . Perhaps in my words you may find something of interest to you.'

Mashurina took a cup and a small lump of sugar, and began to sip the tea and nibble at the sugar.

Paklin's laugh was genuine this time.

'It's as well there are no police here, or the Italian Countess . . . what is it?'

'Rocca di Santo Fiume,' said Mashurina, with imperturbable gravity, as she imbibed the scalding liquid.

'Rocca di Santo Fiume!' repeated Paklin, 'and she sips her tea through the sugar! That's too unlikely! The police would be on the alert in a minute.'

'Yes,' observed Mashurina, 'a fellow in uniform bothered me abroad; he kept asking me questions; I couldn't stand it at last. "Let me alone, do, for mercy's sake!" I said.'

'Did you say that in Italian?'

'No, in Russian.'

'And what did he do?'

'He? Why, walked off, to be sure.'

'Bravo!' cried Paklin. 'Hurrah for the Contessa! Another cup, do! Well, what I wanted to say to you was, you spoke rather coolly of Solomin. But do you know what I can assure you? Fellows like him—they are the real men. One doesn't understand them at first, but they're the real men, take my word for it; and the future's in their hands. They're not heroes; not even "the heroes of labour," about whom some queer fish—an American or an Englishman—wrote a book for the edification of us poor wretches; they're sturdy, rough, dull men of the people. But they're what's wanted now! Just look at Solomin; his brain's clear as daylight, and he's as healthy as a fish. . . . Isn't that a wonder! Why, hitherto with us in Russia it's always been the way that if you're a live man with feelings and a conscience, you're bound to be an invalid! But Solomin's heart, I dare say, aches at what makes ours ache, and he hates what we hate—but his nerves are calm, and his whole body responds as it ought . . . so that he's a splendid fellow! Yes, indeed, a man with an ideal, and no nonsense about him; educated—and from the people; simple—and a little shrewd. . . . What more do you want . . .?

'And never you mind,' pursued Paklin, work-

ing himself up more and more, and not noticing that Mashurina had long ceased to attend, and was once more gazing away into the distance; 'never mind if there are swarms of all sorts in Russia: Slavophils and officials and generals, plain and decorated, and Epicureans and imitators and queer fish of all sorts. (I used to know a lady called Havronya Prishtehov, who suddenly without rhyme or reason turned legitimist, and assured every one that when she died they need only open her body and they would find the name of Henri V. engraved in her heart . . . on the heart of Havronya Prishtehov!) Never mind all that, my dear madam, but let me tell you our only true way lies with the Solomins, coarse, plain, shrewd Solomins! Recollect *when* I am saying this to you, in the winter of 1870, when Germany is making ready to crush France—when——'

'Silushka,' Snanduliya's soft little voice was heard saying behind Paklin's back, 'I think in your speculations on the future you forget our religion and its influence. . . . And besides,' she added hurriedly, 'Madame Mashurina is not listening to you. . . . You had better offer her another cup of tea.'

Paklin pulled himself together.

'Ah, yes, dear lady—won't you really?'

But Mashurina slowly turned her gloomy

eyes upon him, and said absently, 'I wanted to ask you, Paklin, haven't you any notes of Nezhdanov's or his photograph?'

'I have a photograph . . . yes; and I fancy rather a good one, in the table. I'll find it for you directly.'

He began rummaging in the drawer, while Snanduliya went up to Mashurina, and with a long, intent look of sympathy she clasped her hand like a comrade.

'Here it is! I have found it!' cried Paklin, and he gave her the photograph. Mashurina, with hardly a glance at it, and without a word of thanks, crimsoning all over, thrust it quickly into her pocket, put on her hat, and was making for the door.

'Are you going?' said Paklin. 'Tell us, at least, where you live?'

'As it happens.'

'I understand, you don't wish me to know, then! Well, tell me, please, one thing any way: are you still working under the orders of Vassily Nikolaevitch?'

'What is that to you?'

'Or perhaps of some other—Sidor Sidoritch?'

Mashurina made no answer.

'Or does some one anonymous direct you?'

Mashurina was already across the threshold.

'Perhaps it is some one anonymous!'

She slammed the door behind her.

A long while Paklin remained standing before this closed door.

'Anonymous Russia!' he said at last.

THE END

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